

# Hegel's Theory of the Subject

*Edited by David Gray Carlson*



## Hegel's Theory of the Subject

*Also by David Gray Carlson*

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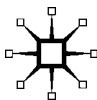
HEGEL AND LEGAL THEORY (*with Drucilla Cornell and Michel Rosenfeld*)

# Hegel's Theory of the Subject

*Edited by*

David Gray Carlson

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**Clark Butler** is Professor and Chair of Philosophy at Purdue University, at the Indiana University-Perdue University Fort Wayne Campus. He is author of *G.W.F. Hegel* (1977), *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* (1996), *History as the Story of Freedom* (1997), *Human Rights Ethics* (2005), with articles on the dialectic, pan-psychism, and the nature of metaphysics, speculative theology, and human rights. As Principal Investigator for an NEH major grant, he translated, with commentary, *Hegel: The Letters* (1984). His edition of *Hegel's Lectures on Logic* will appear in 2005 with Indiana University Press. He directs the IPFW Institute for Human Rights.

**David Gray Carlson** is Professor of Law at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. He is the editor of *Hegel and Legal Theory* (1991), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* (1994), *Law and the Postmodern Mind: Essays on Psychoanalysis and Jurisprudence* (1998) and the author of the forthcoming volume, *Realm of Shadows: Hegel's Logic Explained*.

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**Allegra de Laurentiis** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York-Stony Brook. She is the author of *Marx' und Engels' Rezeption der Hegelschen Kantkritik. Ein Widerspruch im Materialismus* (1983). She has written articles on Hegel and on aspects of Hegel's philosophy to



Rousseau, Kant, Goethe and Marx. She is the author of a forthcoming book, *Becoming a Subject in the Ancient and Modern Worlds: A Study of Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity*.

**George di Giovanni** is Professor of Philosophy at McGill University in Montréal. He is the author of *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Immediate Successors* (Cambridge, 2005), of a study on Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi included in his translation and edition of Jacobi's works (1994), the editor and translator of works of Kant and Hegel, and the author of numerous essays on a variety of topics regarding the late German Enlightenment and German Idealism. He is a past vice-president of the Hegel Society of America.

**Iain Macdonald** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at l'Université de Montréal. His current research focuses on rationality and normativity in the tradition of European philosophy, especially in the works of Hegel, Heidegger, and Adorno.

**William Maker** is Professor of Philosophy at Clemson University and Chair of the Philosophy and Religion Department. He is the editor of *Hegel on Economics and Freedom* (1987), *Hegel and Aesthetics* (2000), and is the author of *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* (1994), and has published numerous articles on Hegel and contemporary philosophy. He was Vice-President of the Hegel Society of America from 1994 to 1996.

**Angelica Nuzzo** is Associate Professor at Brooklyn College, CUNY. She has been Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard (2000–2001). She is the author of two books on Hegel (*Rappresentazione e concetto nella logica della Filosofia del diritto*, 1990, and *Logica e sistema*, 1992), of the *Monograph System* (2003), and of the forthcoming *Kant and the Unity of Reason* (2005). Her numerous essays on German Idealism and Modern Philosophy appear in journals such as the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *Hegel-Studien*, and the *Owl of Minerva*.

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**Robert M. Wallace** is a writer and scholar and has taught at Colgate University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Goddard College. He has translated and written introductions to Hans Blumenberg's *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, *Work on Myth*, and *The Genesis of the Copernican World*, and published papers on Blumenberg and on Hegel.

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# Introduction

David Gray Carlson

The *Science of Logic*<sup>1</sup> stands at the very center of Hegel's philosophy. Upon this work depends the rest of Hegel's prodigious work on nature, politics, aesthetics, and psychology. In Hegel's own words, the *Science of Logic* is nothing short of 'the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind,' as Hegel put it.<sup>2</sup> '[S]trong stuff from a relatively unknown writer who was at the time still only a *Gymnasium* professor with unfulfilled aspirations for university employment.'<sup>3</sup>

After a century of neglect, there is a great upsurge in interest in Hegel's Logic. Whereas the English speaking world produced only two comprehensive studies in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century,<sup>4</sup> it has produced dozens since then.<sup>5</sup> Without question we are in the midst of a Hegelian renaissance.

Anyone familiar with this literature will have the correct impression that by far the greatest amount of work concerns the opening chapters of the *Science of Logic*. By the time the Logic reaches Essence, the amount of scholarship begins to wane. And by the time the last third of the Logic appears on the scene – the *Subjective* Logic – scholarly comment is rare indeed.

This symposium is our attempt to even out the balance. Thirteen scholars have been invited to write essays on Hegel's subjective logic. These essays have been arranged according to Hegel's progression in the *Science of Logic*. The first three essays concern themselves with the transition from essence to concept. The next four concern themselves with the concept proper – the unity of the universal, particular and individual. Thereafter essays consider judgment, syllogism, objectivity, cognition and idea.

Before I say more specifically what will be found in these essays, let me try to set the scene. Hegel's *Science of Logic* is, of course, an ontology – a theory of 'being.' It is therefore radically *not* what Logic is for analytic philosophy – an exercise for clarifying mathematical or linguistic inferences. These are, Hegel says, the 'dead bones of logic' which must be 'quickened by spirit.'<sup>6</sup>

What makes Hegelian philosophy so fundamentally different from analytic philosophy is Hegel's notion that no thing is self-identical. Before the dead bones of logic can be quickened by spirit, Hegel maintains that the following 'quite *simple* insight' (54)<sup>7</sup> must be grasped:

the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity ... but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content... . Because the result, the negation, is a

*specific* negation it has a content. It is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation ... of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite. It is in this way that the system of Notions as such has to be formed—and has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced.<sup>8</sup>

Everything is constituted by negativity, and every concept is finite. This means that every concept *ought* to become its opposite, and out of the wreckage new concepts, logically derived, must emerge. Destruction is creative for Hegel. What passes away is preserved and becomes the stuff of new forms.

Method is key to (and the result of) Hegel's Logic. Method is why the *Science of Logic* can properly be called a logic. The 'simple rhythm'<sup>9</sup> of Hegel's method works as follows. First, the understanding makes a proposition about the universe and what it is. But its propositions are one-sided. They always leave something out. Dialectic reason recalls what the understanding has left out and opposes the proposition with its negation. Yet dialectical reason is equally guilty of making propositions – about what propositional understanding has left out. Its product is just as finite as the understanding's product. It is left for speculative reason to point out what the understanding and dialectical reason have in common – that their propositions are contradictory and cannot endure. The sequence of proposition, dialectic criticism and reconciliation continues right through to the end of the *Science of Logic*.

Another thing should be said about Hegel's method. It begins with the understanding making ridiculous one-sided statements. But as the Logic progresses, the understanding improves. By the time it reaches essence, the understanding makes oppositional propositions. That is to say, the understanding *becomes* dialectical reason. By the time it reaches the subjective logic, the understanding makes notional (or triune) propositions; the understanding *becomes* speculative reason. The Logic is very much a *Bildungsroman* in which the understanding comes to know itself as method and idea.

The first third of the *Science of Logic* concerns itself with being. Being, the realm of one-sided immediacy, is constituted by negativity; it is finite and so it must waft away. When it does, reality passes over to ideality, which can best be thought of as the *memory* of what *once* was but *now* is *not*.

When being passes away (as it must), it points to the realm of essence. Essence is the negation of being, which is to say that essence is thinly defined as 'not being' – nothing more than this. Negation being a correlative term – you must negate *something* – essence is correlative. Everything essential comes in pairs – ground and grounded, form and content, whole and parts, cause and effect, etc.

Essence must appear. That is, the understanding must make a proposition of what essence *is*. And when it does so, essence traverses from the negative world of essence to the world of appearance. Since appearances must disappear – they are *beings* – this means that essence is *for itself* (or *actual*) when it disappears. As with being, essence disappears. The leftovers, after objectivity has disappeared, is what Hegel calls subjectivity.

Hegel's subjectivity is not exactly the same thing as human subjectivity. Humans are limited in time and space, but Hegel's logic of the subject concerns God's subjectivity – God here to be understood as the universe, as the absolute, as that beyond which there is nothing. It should quickly be added that Hegel's God is not straightforwardly the God postulated by Christianity in its historic mode. Charles Taylor remarks that Saint Anselm, Descartes and Leibniz 'would be horrified to see the kind of "God" whose existence is here proved, for this existence is inseparable from that of the world as ordered whole, and this is not the God worshipped by Christians.'<sup>10</sup>

Hegel's logic of the subject is therefore quite different from the ordinary human experience. For instance, we humans are pretty sure that there is something beyond our thought; just because we think something doesn't make it so. We don't have what Kant called intellectual intuitions.<sup>11</sup> But Hegel's God does. What God thinks *is*; for it thought and deed are *one*.<sup>12</sup> The subject of the *Science of Logic* is this divine subjectivity – not limited by time and space.

Yet having said this, it is also true that human subjects *participate* in the divine subjectivity; they are instances of the concrete spirit. All finite things are part of the infinite thing. Indeed, Stanley Rosen has promised that the study of Hegel's subjective logic 'provides man with practical satisfaction by reconciling him to his earthly dwelling, and the mode of reconciliation is the theoretical resolution of alienation.'<sup>13</sup>

I have said that Hegel's subject is the leftovers from the collapse of being and essence. External reality was not viable. What the universal subject must do is to re-establish a reality for itself. To quote from one of our forthcoming essays, 'free subjectivity [involves] the absolutization of the subject, where the absolute subject produces objective reality from out of itself, and knows and is at one with itself therein.'<sup>14</sup>

Across the pages of the Subjective Logic, the subject discovers and builds from its own resources a reality in which it can recognize itself. At first, the subject divides itself into subject and predicate (judgment). Why must the subject subdivide? I try to say why in one of the forthcoming essays: there is an alien disturbance within the subject, which constitutes the remains of the realm of being which has erased itself (yet preserved itself) on its own logic.<sup>15</sup> (Lacanian theorists will recognize this as 'ex-timacy'.)<sup>16</sup> The subject encounters its alien predicate and gradually comes to recognize itself in it. It gains proof and self-certainty (syllogism) and therefore enters into a subject – object relation.

Yet Hegel was especially keen to show that there is a unifying substance underwriting subject and object. This is the Hegelian 'idea.' Just as being and essence erased themselves, so subject and object must erase themselves in favor of a higher unity. The *Science of Logic* ends when this unity is described as the very method which constitutes logic in the first place. This is what Hegel calls *absolute idea*.

The fifteen essays in this collection cover all aspects of the development of the subject into idea.

In *Hegel's Logic of Freedom*, William Maker argues that the *Science of Logic* is about freedom in four different ways: It presupposes liberation from an unfree way of thinking;<sup>17</sup> logic precedes method (even as logic and method coincide); it defines freedom; it establishes freedom as the basis of articulating truth. These are propositions that Hegelians are well prepared to accept. More controversially, Maker strongly claims that logic is *not* about nature:

To erroneously anticipate, as is commonly done, that this logic is also already at the same time about something else, namely the reality of nature and spirit, is to vitiate the autonomy of the logic, violate its scientific character, and unavoidably lapse into the foundationalist gamut Hegel has rejected, by projecting logic as disclosing the 'essence of reality.'

This argument will surprise some who think, for example, that the first chapter of measure is about physics, the second about chemistry, etc. or that the objectivity chapters late in the *Science of Logic* is some sort of preview of the *Philosophy of Nature*. Maker's claim is motivated by showing logic to be radically autonomous from nature yet simultaneously *in* nature. This is a thought-provoking claim.

Stephen Houlgate's *Why Hegel's Concept Is Not the Essence of Things* attacks the notion that the Logic is prior to nature. This notion is an 'essentialist' claim, whereby that which appears points back to something prior. The logic of the concept, however, precludes any such prior 'positing.' According to Professor Houlgate:

The concept, by contrast, does not stand in any 'relation' to its differences through which it might dominate or govern them. It does not impose its identity on those differences or violate them in any way. (In this sense, Nietzsche and Levinas could not be more wrong.) Rather, the concept *lets* its differences emerge from its own identity. Indeed, it enjoys its identity only in letting those differences emerge as genuine differences and so letting itself become differentiated. The concept, however, is not indifferent to particularity and individuality. Rather, it continues itself in that particularity and individuality and so 'is, in its other, in peaceful communion with itself.' As John Burbidge aptly puts



it, the universal overreaches its other, 'not by force, but by quietly being present in it.' As such, Hegel writes, the concept can be called '*free love and boundless blessedness*.'<sup>18</sup>

George di Giovanni's contribution, *Hegel's Anti-Spinozism: The Transition to Subjective Logic and the End of Classical Metaphysics*, compares the way in which Hegel and Fichte<sup>19</sup> overcome Spinozistic substance. Both add a subjective element absent in Spinoza. For both, thought takes priority over being in the sense that being acquires intelligibility only as conceptualized. Fichte, however, still retains the existential priority of Spinoza's substance over thought. The net result is that the concept reveals being only by hiding it, i.e. only by way of intimation. For Hegel, on the contrary, the Absolute (i.e. the equivalent of Spinoza's substance) is the Idea itself, or the concept of the concept. In its medium, therefore, being acquires its full intelligibility. Hegel thus overcomes the standpoint of classical metaphysics.

In *The One and the Concept: On Hegel's Reading of Plato's 'Parmenides'*, Allegra de Laurentiis focuses on a text that is key for Hegel in the *Science of Logic*: Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* – not to be confused with the historic Parmenides, who preached the doctrine of the unchangeable One. Plato's *Parmenides* shows young Socrates that the One must be dynamic and multiple.<sup>20</sup> Professor de Laurentiis argues that the dynamic one of *Parmenides* has the structure of Hegel's Notion in the *Subjective Logic*.

In *History, Concepts and Normativity in Hegel*, Dario Perinetti emphasizes the immanent nature of conceptual development, compared to those causal sciences that begin with 'given' material. According to Perinetti, Hegelian concepts are 'treated *intensionally* as bearers of semantic properties or marks ... 'Hegel aims at *making sense*, not at 'preserving the truth of representation.' This does not make Hegel an opponent of the causal sciences. Rather, for Hegel logic and causal sciences have the responsibility to know the limits and borders of each.

Iain Macdonald emphasizes, in *The Concept and Its Double: Power and Powerlessness in Hegel's Subjective Logic*, a point that I think is key to understanding Hegel's Logic and indeed any given part of Hegel's philosophy: *failure* is part of the system. Professor Macdonald gathers together the many instances in which Hegel emphasizes the impotence (*Ohnmacht*) of the concept as this is developed across the *Science of Logic*.

Robert Berman's essay, *Ways of Being Singular: The Logic of Individuality*, identifies four common usages for the word 'individuality' and develops some models based on philosophical usage. These models are then tested against Hegel's famous definition of individuality as the unity of universality and particularity. Professor Berman's conclusion is that individuality must account for class or set membership, if it is to capture both Hegel's meaning and the common usage of the term.

Richard Dien Winfield reviews the progress of Hegel's critique of judgment in *The Types of Universals and the Forms of Judgment*. In his analysis, Professor Winfield portrays the universal as progressing from an abstract universal (quality and class), to a universal with the particular, and finally to the concrete universal – universal with itself, the particular and individuality. Judgment comes to closure when it is shown that subject and predicate each fully has the structure of judgment, which is itself the *relation* of subject and predicate. Or, as I like to say, notion is itself, its other, and the unity of itself and other. Judgment therefore concludes when both the subject and the predicate are thoroughly notional.

In the first of my contributions to this symposium, I try to explain, in *Why Are There Four Hegelian Judgments?*, the largely unexplained abandonment of the usual trinity by which the Logic proceeds. Notoriously, there are four (not three) judgments, which corresponds to Kant's Table of the Function of Judgments. Picking up on a suggestion of Slavoj Žižek, I try to show that there is always a silent fourth operating throughout the *Science of Logic*, which erupts in judgment. In addition, I try to show that this fourth judgment is swallowed whole in the following chapter – Syllogism – so that trinitarianism is once again restored.

Professor Winfield takes up where judgment left off in his second essay in this collection: *The System of Syllogism*. Winfield shows how Hegel first demonstrates that syllogisms produce only contingent wisdom. But this very failure of syllogism has a content. There is a *class* of syllogisms with a universal property – that syllogisms prove nothing. Class leads to analogy, which is the birth of *genus*, in which the concept efficaciously manifests itself in its 'species being.'

Robert Wallace, in *Hegel's Refutation of Rational Egoism, in True Infinity and the Idea*, argues that while Hegel's systematic response to the challenge of rational egoism culminates in his famous account of master and bondsman and mutual recognition, in the *Encyclopedia's Philosophy of Spirit* and the *Phenomenology of spirit*, the cogency of this account depends entirely on his treatments of Finite and Infinite, Identity and Diversity, and Objectivity, Life, and Cognition, in the *Science of Logic*.

In *Hegel's Science of Logic in an Analytic Mode*, Clark Butler restates Hegelian logic in Fregeian terms, translating identity in difference linguistically as identity under different descriptions. The aim is to clarify Hegel within the very analytic tradition that revolted against him. The question, as Butler recognizes, is whether the logical 'content' is left unaffected by its regimentation in symbolic logic. Professor Butler believes this is possible, and that Hegel's famous praise of German ambiguity is no impediment to this project.<sup>21</sup>

John Burbidge, in *Cognition and Finite Spirit*, shows how the method that unfolds in Hegel's Cognition chapter equally unfolds in 'philosophy of the

real' – i.e. nature and finite psychology. In cognition, thought tries to conform itself to the object (the 'true'). Then it tries to conform the object to thought ('the good'). It turns out the true and the good need each other if thought and object are to coincide in absolute idea. This same sequence of proposition, dialectic opposite, and synthesis can also be identified throughout Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*.

Angelica Nuzzo's essay, *The End of Hegel's Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method*, takes as its text Hegel's claim that Absolute Idea 'is the sole subject matter and content of philosophy. ... All else is error, confusion, opinion, endeavor, caprice and transitoriness.'<sup>22</sup> Initially, this 'all else' seems at war with the claim that Absolute Idea *is* all there is. How *can* there be error in contrast to Absolute Idea if Absolute Idea is the whole thing? Professor Nuzzo suggests that there is a radical break between Absolute Idea (i.e. method) and all the earlier stages of the logic, which comprise the erroneous 'all else.' Method is what rescues the 'all else,' which is still prey for external reflection. When method is shown to have been present in all the sequence of faulty definition of the absolute, only then can logic come to an end.

Last scene of all to this strange eventful history is a return to Hegel's beginning, a 'mere oblivion, Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.'<sup>23</sup> In *The Antepenultimacy of the Beginning in the Science of Logic*, I try to refine the usual view that the last step of the Logic is also the first. Rather, I claim that it is the antepenultimate step (i.e. third from last) that is the first step of the Logic. The antepenultimate step of the Logic is abstraction as such – the affirmative proposition of the Understanding. *This* is what pure being turns out to be. And this is why pure being is indeterminate and pure nothing. So instead of pure being 'changing' into pure nothing, I suggest that the Logic begins with Absolute Knowing (the ultimate step of the Logic) *failing to begin*. That is, Absolute Knowing descends from its ultimate status to the status of the Understanding. Hegel's beginning is therefore a failure, which Hegel properly treats as that around which the entire logical process turns.

The chapters in this book were presented at a conference held at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City on 28–29 March 2004. The conference was held in connection with the seminar on Hegel's logic which I have conducted for the past seven years at the law school. The conference occurred under the auspices of the Jacob Burns Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, which generously funded the conference. The conference could not have occurred without the energetic support of many members of the law school administration, but special thanks are due to Ilene Mates, Amy Gaudet, and Paulette Crowther. Thanks are due to the four excellent panel leaders who stimulated and contained audience discussion during the conference: John Hoffmeyer, Roger Berkowitz, Michael Baur, and Arthur Jacobson.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Rhett Rountree, my research assistant whose energy and passion were absolutely vital to the creation of this conference. Tragically, Rhett was killed in an accident in July 2004. He never got to see the final product. I am very pleased to dedicate this volume to his memory. The world needs more (not fewer) philosophers, and Rhett was definitely a fine one. He will be missed and his passing regretted.

## Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* 601 (Arnold V. Miller, trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as SL]; 1 G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* 21 (1975) [hereinafter cited as WL].
2. SL, *supra* note 1, at 50; 1 WL, *supra* note 1, at 31.
3. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: a Biography* 342 (2000). Kaufmann comments that SL 'is not as mad as these words may seem; in any case, it is still the labor of an utterly lonely genius.' Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* 174 (1978).
4. J.M.E. McTaggart, *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic* (1910); G.R.G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic* 38 (1950).
5. Just a sample of this literature would include John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion: The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1992); John W. Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (1981); Clark Butler, *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* (1996); Andrew Haas, *Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity* (2000); Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel* (1983); Justus Hartnack, *An Introduction to Hegel's Logic* (Lars Aagaard-Mogensen trans., 1998); M.J. Inwood, *Hegel* (1983); William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* 94 (1994); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Dialectic* (1988); Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (1989); Stanley Rosen, *G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* 59 (1974); Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (1975); Richard Dien Winfield, *Overcoming Foundations: Studies in Systematic Philosophy* (1989). One of the best books ever written on Hegel's logic was published in German in the 1920s, but not translated until 1987. Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* 15 (Seyla Benhabib trans. 1987). Also excellent is Hyppolite's book, not translated until 1997. Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence* 61 (Leonard Lawlor and Amit Sen trans., 1997).
6. SL, *supra* note 1, at 53; 1 WL, *supra* note 1, at 34.
7. SL, *supra* note 1, at 54; 1 WL, *supra* note 1, at 35.
8. SL, *supra* note 1, at 54; 1 WL, *supra* note 1, at 35–6.
9. SL, *supra* note 1, at 54; 1 WL, *supra* note 1, at 35.
10. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* 317 (1975).
11. According to Charles Taylor:

Hegel reproaches Kant for not having cleaved to the notion of an intellectual intuition, which he himself invented. This would be an understanding, which unlike ours did not have to depend on external reception, on being affected from outside, for its contents, but created them with its thought. This archetypical intellect Kant attributed to God; it was quite beyond us. But God's intellect is ultimately revealed to us for Hegel, it only lives in our thought. Hence we can participate in an intellectual intuition. God's thought is ours.

Taylor, *supra* note 6, at 301.

12. An intellectual intuition therefore amounts to 'the direct apprehension of things as they are ...' *Rosen, supra* note 6, at 267.
13. *Rosen, supra* note 6, at 238.
14. William Maker, *Hegel's Logic of Freedom*, Chapter 1 *infra*. Relevant here is the comment from the *Phenomenology*: 'But self-consciousness is all reality, not merely *for itself* but also *in itself*, only through *becoming* this reality, or rather through *demonstrating* itself to be such.' G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* ¶ 233 (Arnold V. Miller trans. 1977).
15. David Gray Carlson, 'Why Are There Four Hegelian Judgments?', Chapter 9 *infra*.
16. 'Ex-timacy' is a Lacanian neologism, representing that which is foreign but within us. It reflects the proposition that what we feel is *most* ourselves is in some way outside of ourselves as well. Jeanne L. Schroeder, *The Four Discourses of Law: a Lacanian Analysis of Legal Practice*, 79 *Tex. L. Rev.* 15, 32–3 (2000).
17. Work that the *Phenomenology* accomplishes. Hegel views the *Phenomenology* as the presupposition of the *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 49 ('The Notion of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it'); 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 30.
18. Citing Burbidge, *Logic*, *supra* note 6, at 113; *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 603; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 242–3.
19. Johann Gottlieb Fichte was an important entrepôt between Kant and Hegel. In 1817, Hegel succeeded Fichte as the professor of philosophy in Berlin.
20. See Murray Greene, *Hegel and the Problems of Atomism*, 11 *Int'l Stud. Phil.* 123 (1979) ('The dramatic Parmenides proceeds to show that if the one is not a many then it can have no parts, can be neither in motion nor at rest, indeed cannot even be selfsame') (citation omitted).
21. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 107; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 94 ('It is a delight to speculative thought to find in the language words which have in themselves a speculative meaning; the German language has a number of such').
22. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 824; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 484.
23. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7.

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# 1

## Hegels' Logic of Freedom

William Maker

Mind is active and conducts itself in its activity in a determinate manner; but this activity has no other ground than its freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Reason is thought conditioning itself with perfect freedom.<sup>2</sup>

What is the *Science of Logic* about? One account Hegel gives of it would not sound strange to today's logicians: it is about the 'forms of thought' and the 'laws of thinking.'<sup>3</sup> But in at least two decisive respects Hegel's conception of a formal logic is different from contemporary versions: He insists that even as 'pure abstractions' logical forms are not divorced from content,<sup>4</sup> and he holds further that logic does not merely provide rules for arriving at truth when some given, external content is added,<sup>5</sup> but affords truth itself, and not just any old truth but 'infinite' 'absolute' truth:<sup>6</sup> 'the logical is the absolute form of the truth, and, even more than that, the pure truth itself.'<sup>7</sup> Further distancing himself from contemporary views he notes that this truth is *not* a matter of the 'correctness of the knowledge of facts,' for that is 'not truth itself.'<sup>8</sup> Still other comments Hegel makes about logic may also seem sufficiently out of temper with our time to relegate the *Science of Logic* to the junkheap of error where it has so long dwelled in desuetude. Logic, he tells us, is 'the colorless communion of the spirit with itself ...'<sup>9</sup> 'the spirit which contemplates its own pure essence ...'.<sup>10</sup> But even as communing with itself, logic has special powers for it 'must certainly be said to be the supernatural element which permeates every relationship of man to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need, instinct, and simply by so doing transforms it into something human ...'.<sup>11</sup> This must be the case since 'the development of all natural and spiritual life, rests solely on the nature of the pure essentialities which constitute the content of logic ...'.<sup>12</sup> 'Thus *logic* coincides with *metaphysics*, with the science of *things* grasped in *thoughts* that used be taken to express the *essentialities* of the *things*.'<sup>13</sup> Explaining why truth is not the correctness of facts, he observes that, '[w]ith this introduction of the content into the logical



treatment, the subject matter is not *things* [Dinge] but their *import* [Sache], the concept of them.<sup>14</sup> As such, logic presents that which is 'solely an object, a product and content of thinking, and is the absolute self-subsistent object [*die and und für sich seiende Sache*], the logos, the reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things ...'.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps most notoriously he tells us:

This objective thinking then, is the content of pure science. Consequently, far far from it being formal, far from it standing in need of a matter to constitute an actual and true cognition, it is its content alone which has absolute truth or, if one still wanted to employ the word matter, it is the veritable [*wahrhafte*] matter – but a matter which is not external to the form, since this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself. Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind.<sup>16</sup>

So for Hegel, logic marks the consummation of the history of philosophy and the completion of its ancient task of providing absolute comprehension of the absolute, that which is eternal, divine, infinite, unconditioned, and also importantly, *causa sui*, the self-sufficient cause and ground of itself. For as 'the silent region[s] of thought which has come to itself and communes only with itself' as the 'self-movement' of thought, logic constitutes 'spirit thinking its own essential nature' and in its 'immanent development' logic 'gives itself its own determinateness and in its determinateness its equality with itself'<sup>17</sup> logic is the 'act of thinking putting itself at the standpoint where it is for its own self, *producing its own object for itself* thereby, and *giving it to itself*'.<sup>18</sup>

Yet logic's timelessness is qualified, or mediated, for Hegel repeatedly insists that his task has been to undertake the reform of logic which is necessitated because, unlike other domains of philosophy, logic had been hitherto untouched by the indefatigable spirit of the age.<sup>19</sup> 'Logic shows no traces so far of the new spirit which has arisen in the sciences no less than in the world of actuality.'<sup>20</sup> For 'whatever may have been accomplished for the form and content of philosophy [*Wissenschaft*] in other directions, the science of logic which constitutes metaphysics proper or purely speculative philosophy, has hitherto still been much neglected.'<sup>21</sup> While referring in the 1812 Preface to this timeliness, the spirit of the age, Hegel does not explicitly state what he has in mind, but he does make this clear elsewhere. A glance at the *Philosophy of History* immediately discloses that the 'new spirit' he is taking about is the spirit of freedom, and he holds that this spirit not only pervades the other sciences and actuality, but is most funda-

mentally philosophical in character. 'All will readily assent to the doctrine that spirit, among other properties, is also endowed with freedom; but philosophy teaches that all the qualities of spirit exist only through freedom; that all are but means for attaining freedom; that all seek and produce this and this alone. It is a result of speculative philosophy that freedom is the sole truth of spirit.'<sup>22</sup>

How are the assertive events of the worldly actuality of modern freedom, the 'substantive form of the spirit' which has 'pushed off' 'the form of an earlier culture' 'like withered leaves'<sup>23</sup> to be connected with the timeless communing of thought with itself which comprises logic? Can logic have any plausible association with freedom beyond the Aristotelian notion (mentioned by Hegel) that philosophy requires leisure?<sup>24</sup> Hegel certainly thinks so. In the *History of Philosophy* he notes that central to the Enlightenment<sup>25</sup> is the critical spirit of modern philosophical thought which is free to call everything into question.<sup>26</sup> And he especially recognizes Kant as having made free subjectivity the center of philosophy and reason.<sup>27</sup> But a crucial step remains, for in the form left by Kant, the critical philosophy is still tied to experience; it thinks its concepts as empty and incomplete and as in need of some given content in order to afford truth and, because of this, Hegel tells us, metaphysics has been severed from logic.<sup>28</sup> This condition of thought's dependence on a given, alien other constitutes 'self-renunciation on the part of reason, the concept of truth is lost; it is limited to knowing only subjective truth, only phenomena, appearances, only something to which the nature of the object does not correspond; knowing has lapsed into opinion.'<sup>29</sup> Since heteronomy – determinate dependency on an alien other – is the problem holding philosophy back, what is to be done by way of infusing logic with the spirit of the age, of independence, and thereby recapturing the lost concept of truth? When we have at last worked through to the consummating truth of the logic in the subjective logic, the timely dimension of the absolute, eternal logos, its relation to freedom, is boldly and explicitly asserted: 'With the concept therefore we have entered the realm of *freedom*.'<sup>30</sup> 'In point of fact ... the principle of philosophy is the *infinite free concept*, and all its content rests on that alone<sup>31</sup> ... *freedom*, that is the *concept*, and with it *everything that is true*.'<sup>32</sup> We might paraphrase Keats for Hegel: not beauty but 'Freedom is truth, truth freedom/ that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'<sup>33</sup>

What can we make of Hegel's idea that there is a direct, intelligible, and substantive link between timeless, absolute truth, and freedom, that they are not merely externally and contingently connected (because attaining truth requires independent thought) but also internally and necessarily one, that truth and freedom are in fact inseparable, coeval, and coexistent? One way of understanding the connection is to see Hegel's development of Kant's notion of free subjectivity as involving the absolutization of the subject, where the absolute subject produces objective reality from out of

itself, and knows and is at one with itself therein. After all Hegel asserts 'that substance is essentially subject, is expressed in the representation of the absolute as *spirit* – the most sublime concept and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion.'<sup>34</sup> 'In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the true, not only as *substance*, but equally as *subject*.'<sup>35</sup> This reading would also seem to be confirmed by the very title *subjective* logic, and its opening, where Hegel delineates its relation to the culmination of objective logic in the logic of essence: 'Accordingly the concept is the *truth* of substance ...'<sup>36</sup> 'but this consummation is no longer *substance* itself but something higher, the *concept*, the *subject*.'<sup>37</sup>

I am going to argue however that the logic, and the subjective logic as its culmination, should not be read in this manner at all, despite the venerable tradition of doing so. Instead, I will contend that Hegel's linkage of truth and freedom is rather more radical than may first appear if we simply take a conception of free subjectivity as substance as the determinative basis for the system, as productive of the essentialities of things which the logic articulates, and ultimately of reality itself. In the *Phenomenology* and in many other places, Hegel cautions us with remarks such as this: 'Hence the mere anticipation that the absolute is subject is not only *not* the actuality of this concept, but it even makes the actuality impossible; for the anticipation posits the subject as an inert point, whereas the actuality is self-movement.'<sup>38</sup> It is precisely this self-movement or self-determination, which reaches its culmination in the subjective logic, which we need to attend to in order to understand how a modern idea of freedom can initiate the culmination of philosophy. More specifically, the proper approach to the logic is to see it as being about freedom in the following four ways: (1) Freedom is the basis for the logic in the timely respect that logic presupposes *liberation* from a paradigmatically unfree way of thinking. (2) The logic is about freedom, or has freedom as its basis, in that, in the immanent development of its method and content, logic precedes as *the free self-development* of thought. And just because and insofar as it *is* free, self-determining and thus radically *self-grounding*, logic can afford absolute, unconditioned truth. (So freedom as logic's *method* of determination is the prerequisite for the complete justification of discourse which philosophy has historically sought.) (3) Since in self-determining thought method and content must be one,<sup>39</sup> the logic is also *about* freedom in another way: it delineates as its subject matter what it means for something to be radically free, thoroughly and completely determined in its own right. (4) As a consequence of (2) being self-grounding because freely self-determining, and (3) being about what it means for something to be determined in its own right, logic is the basis for articulating the truth, the essentialities of things, even non-logical things. I will now look at each of these four related ways in which the logic is about freedom, with increasing attention to the subjective logic, since it is there that logic's free

self-development is completed and recapitulated, and its nature as free is made fully explicit. I will argue that it is just because the logic is inseparable from freedom that it can afford absolute truth, and fulfill metaphysics' ancient goal of offering absolute knowledge of the absolute, albeit in a timely, modern fashion, where truth and reality coincide with freedom.

(1) Logic presupposes freedom, or thinking subjectivity through to freedom. Speaking, in the subjective logic, of prior metaphysics, Hegel praises Jacobi for showing that 'the fault lies with the method and the entire nature of cognition itself, which only apprehends a connection of *conditionedness* and *dependence* and therefore proves itself inadequate to what is in and for itself, to what is absolutely true.'<sup>40</sup> This is not the only place where Hegel depicts being dependent on or conditioned by an other – the state of heteronomy or unfreedom – as antithetical to true cognition. I've already noted his observation that Kant's making truth dependent on the givens of experience degrades knowledge to opinion. But Hegel's systematic consideration and refutation of the identification of truth with other-determination or heteronomy is to be found of course in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the self-liberation of thought from the other-determining condition where subjectivity (understood as consciousness) is defined in relation to a given object, such that *Objektivität* is identified with *Gegenständlichkeit*, the given condition of other-determination. The *Phenomenology* shows that as long as truth is regarded as a matter of other-determination, as grounded in a given other, knowledge can never be shown to correspond to its object. Every attempt by consciousness to show how some given object can be known as it is given fails, even when (in Chapter VIII) consciousness takes its own self-knowing as its object. Conclusion: neither any particular given, nor the general idea that cognition is *of* the given can be authoritative for philosophical cognition. This disclosure effects the liberation from the *Form der Gegenständlichkeit* which makes scientific philosophy attainable: 'Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness.'<sup>41</sup>

Importantly for understanding the logic and subjective logic, Hegel notes that the liberation was not achieved by transcendental idealism:

This philosophy also made a start at letting reason exhibit itself in its own determinations. But this attempt, because it proceeded from a subjective standpoint, could not be brought to a successful conclusion. Later this standpoint, and with it too the attempt to develop the content of pure science, was abandoned.<sup>42</sup>

'But if philosophy was to make any real progress' it had to go beyond

the abstract relation of a subjective knowing to an object, so that in this way the cognition of the *infinite form*, that is, of the concept, would be

introduced. But in order that this cognition may be reached, that form still had to be relieved of the finite determinateness in which it is ego, or consciousness. The form, when thus thought out into its purity, will have within itself the capacity to *determine* itself, that is, to give itself a content, and that a *necessarily* explicated content in the form of a system of determinations of thought.<sup>43</sup>

So what is crucial is precisely the liberation of thought from the unfreedom of other-determination, where 'the object has and retains the perennial character of an other for the ego' and this requires that the subject disappear as well, since its very determinateness depends on and cannot be separated from 'the insuperable opposition of its object.'<sup>44</sup>

The subjective logic is the logic of concept, of essence which has sublated its relation to being or its illusory being [*Schein*] and in its determination is no longer external but is subjective – free, self-subsistent and self-determining, or rather it is the subject itself. Since subjectivity brings with it the misconception of contingency and caprice and, in general, characteristics belonging to the form of *consciousness*, no particular importance is to be attached here to the distinction of subjective and objective ...<sup>45</sup>

So it is the complete liberation from the determinate form of subjectivity which marks the beginning of logical science as the freedom of an original self-determination.

(2) Freedom is the form and content of logic. It is not difficult to see why logic as philosophical science must begin in and as pure freedom, in the self-determination of self-determination, if it is going to be absolute and unconditioned. Independently of a modern practical interest in worldly freedom, Hegel shows that philosophy itself requires freedom at its innermost *theoretical* core. Hegel's strictures at the opening of the logic to the effect that logic must begin without presupposition and without any given method or content are well known and simply mark his insistence that philosophy's ancient goal of achieving unconditional, absolute truth requires that it commence as the radically free act of self-determining thought. For, if thought has an already determinate, which is to say a given, external, ground, the justification for beginning with this given determination rather than another will require either an infinite regress or vicious circularity. And this will be the case whether its foundational other is some determinate presupposition either of form, method, or of content. Only a beginning which is absolutely free, because devoid of any presupposed given determination, can make the radical justification of a self-grounding possible. Any other beginning will be ultimately arbitrary, condemning philosophy to the relativism of opinion because it will depend

in its truth on something other than what it has freely established on its own, and hence it will be dependent on and conditioned by something whose legitimacy may always be challenged. Unconditional absolute truth is only possible when and insofar as truth is coincident with the undetermined self-determination which takes place when the only operative condition is the achievement and securing of thought's autonomous self-determination. Thus we may assume nothing in advance concerning whether and how the logic is about anything other than this pure self-determination.

(3) Logic has freedom – and hence truth – as its subject matter. Because both its mode of procedure and its subject matter are literally nothing other than self-determination, and since this self-determination is thoroughly free, unconditioned, and hence infinite or universal in scope, logic is about freedom in the sense that it is about what it means for *any* entity (*Sache*) to be thoroughly determined in its own right. And since it *is* about nothing other than what it means for something to be determined in its own right, about what it is for an entity just to be *what* it is, *as* it is, in and for itself, logic is at the same time about truth. Truth and freedom coincide because to know something in its independence from all alien other-determination is just to know something as it is, absent any qualification or coloration from without. This brings us to (4) the coincidence of a logic of freedom with a metaphysics of things, raising the vexing issue of the sense in which this logic is metaphysics, capable of disclosing what, to use Hegel's phrase, 'used to be taken to express' the essentialities of things.<sup>46</sup>

Traditionally, this claim is thought to be explained by Hegel's absolute idealism, understood as asserting the identity of thought and things, with the notion that phenomenally given things (somehow) really are thoughts. However, this only makes sense if we stick to the heteronomous model of a given subject in a determinative relation to objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*), the very model he emphatically rejects, and if we further revert to the phenomenal truth he explicitly derides, by continuing to assume that philosophical truth *discloses* phenomenal truth by way of replacing what ordinary phenomenal knowing affords us. For Hegel however, truth as initially disclosed in logic operates on a different level altogether, one which *displaces* phenomenal knowledge as inadequate to philosophical, fully fledged truth, while allowing such knowledge of the given facts a complementary and subordinate role.<sup>47</sup> So while logic may reveal what it means for being to be fully self-determined, this does not amount to asserting that everything that exists has or even approximates this quality of fullness of being. The view I am disputing (identity or replacement theory, where metaphysics stands in for phenomenal knowledge) takes it as self-evident that only on the ground of an assertion of the identity of thought and things is it possible for thought to do what Hegel claims – reveal the truth of things *a priori*. I shall argue rather that it is his thinking of the *non-*

identity of thought and things, their mutual free independence, which makes *a priori* metaphysics possible. Hegel is actually up to something quite subtle and the articulation of logic's freedom is central to it. What am I getting at?

Just by initially excluding all other-determination, all heteronomy, thought can come to conceive things *not* as they may be found given to thought (for as Hegel indicates that approach leads necessarily to truth reduced to subjective appearance, and to the *Ding an Sich*) but as they are in their own right, that is, in *their* freedom as determined independently of thought and the thinking subject altogether. If metaphysics means having perfected knowledge of things as they truly are, knowledge which is fully justified and fully adequate to its object – this is just what purely self-determining thought makes possible, both as regards itself *and* its other. As I shall explain subsequently, systematic thought does this in two ways, and in two venues. One is the logic proper and the other is the *Realphilosophie* (but of course what occurs in the logic is the propaedeutic and the basis for the *Realphilosophie*, and the transition to the latter is crucial to logic's attaining its full autonomy). In light of the history of misinterpretations of Hegel, it cannot be stressed too much that in logic we are concerned strictly and solely with undetermined self-determination, hence our subject matter is exclusively the nature of self-determined determinacy as such. To erroneously anticipate, as is commonly done, that this logic is also already at the same time about something else, namely the reality of nature and spirit, is to vitiate the autonomy of the logic, violate its scientific character, and unavoidably lapse into the foundationalist gambit Hegel has rejected, by projecting logic as disclosing the 'essence' of reality. Such a projection can only be undertaken if we go back to the *Form der Gegenständlichkeit* by smuggling into the logic a given, fixed distinction between thought and object, just to claim that thought has overcome this and, that in considering itself in logic, it is also about something else. (This is also a lapse from the concept to the logic of essence, whose ground/grounded relationship of determination consciousness exemplifies.)<sup>48</sup> But to go beyond the opposition of consciousness, as Hegel insists scientific thought must, is not to postulate that thought and reality are one (so that logic is already about given reality.) It is rather to abstain from the whole gambit of such assumptions about the identity or the difference of thought and objects.<sup>49</sup> To read *Realphilosophie* into logic (even if only in some 'formal' sense) is also to revert to the error of identity theory by claiming that non-logical things are just embodied logical forms, and to hold that logical forms are in need of content and are not self-sufficient, a view we have seen Hegel explicitly reject. *Realphilosophie* actually begins (and we move on the grounds of logic into the metaphysics of things) by considering the radical other to strictly self-determining determinacy in our thinking the non-identity of thought and nature. In the course of the *Realphilosophie* we then gradually come to



consider how approximations of self-determining determinacy may emerge in the domain of a reality given independent of thought. We ultimately come back in the system to think self-determining determinacy itself, as something achieved in the given world, when we come to philosophy as self-determining systematic thought in absolute spirit, at the end of the *Encyclopedia* when we have already thought through the worlds of nature and spirit. The philosophies of nature and spirit articulate the various worldly enabling conditions which make it possible, among other things, for us to attain various modes of freedom, including freedom from having the truth of our thinking determined by those enabling conditions; this is the freedom of philosophy itself.

What Hegel means in distinguishing his approach – because of its incorporation of the freedom of the age – from prior metaphysics, while still claiming to fulfil or replace it, is simply that prior metaphysics had allowed thought to determine objects. It illicitly read thought into them, or, what amounts to a simple inversion of the same thing, it allowed thought to be determined by things, *instead of allowing each to be freely what it is in its own independent nature*. The decisive question is how thought comes to put itself in the position of being able to do this, to think both itself and its other as free and autonomously determined. The first part of the story is internal to the logic's self-determination and is fully delineated in the subjective logic. This is the story of the *necessity* for thought in its self-determining to articulate a changing series of relations to an other in its very effort to achieve its own full and satisfactory self-determination. Although logic presupposes liberation from other-determination, the irony or cunning of the dialectic is that thematizing the other is inseparable from thought's establishing and articulating its own fully self-determined autonomy. The second part of the story, which I shall recount briefly later, involves the transition out of logic to the *Realphilosophie*. This is a transition to an *other* other – an other to logic and thought altogether.

As to the first part of the story: how can pure self-determining thought come to constitute a metaphysics of things as they are independent of thought? Answer: by disclosing the thinking of otherness as constitutive of thought's own self-determination. How then does otherness emerge in logic as part of thought's self-determination such that, rather than reducing otherness to itself, thought can progressively move to let otherness be free and comprehend it in its freedom, its being what it is in and for itself? The thematizing of otherness as necessary for self-determination is present from the very start of the logic of being, when we discover that being cannot be thought without thinking the vanishing of a differentiating relation to its (apparent) other, nothing. Worth noting is that the emergent other-determining taking place here is not imported; Hegel shows that being's other (nothing) is part and parcel of thinking being, and also that, like being, nothing has no given determinate features whatsoever. And this

*freedom from* prior determination is precisely why being cannot be held fast to as determinately distinguished from nothing, nor nothing as determinately distinguished from being; rather, each emerges as a vanishing relation to the other in becoming. The point then is that when we start in freedom, without any given as other-determinative for what is, what is vanishes into its other and its other into it simply because neither can be thought without the other. *Ab initio*, logic does not revert to a heteronomous determining ground from which determinacy is derived, but develops as a forward moving self-determining *in* an emerging other whose own determinate nature first appears in the process.

The centrality of moving forward into a relation with an other comes to an initial completion, and is itself transformed, in moving from the logic of being to the logic of essence. The truth of the logic of being which emerges as the transition to the logic of essence is this: being only is what it is in terms of its relation to an other, but this other only is what is in terms of its relation to *its* other, which can only be being, so what is, is as a *self*-differentiating relation to a posited other. In the logic of essence being no longer *disappears* in its other, but *appears* in and through it, and is determined in virtue of the self-contrasting, as a result. The logic of essence then unfolds as an effort to think the determining side of the self-differentiating contrast; if free thought is sustained in that no given determinacy is postulated, if the process of autonomous self-determination is held to, the nature of the contrastive differentiating which establishes determinacy must emerge as reciprocal in character: neither side can be held fast as the primal determining ground upon which the determinacy of its other depends and from which it is derived. Each is equally what it is as the other of its other, but *this* other only is what it is as the other of *its* other.

Thus we come to the concept: to be itself, to be self-identical, is to be the other of the other: thus it is now made explicit, or posited, that to be in a mutually differentiating relation with the other is just to be oneself. Since each is otherwise indeterminate except as the other of the other, each is the 'other of the other' and is self-identical just in and as this sustained differentiating; *differentiating (negation) is self-determining self-identification*: to be other is to be oneself and just thereby still to be differentiated from this other even in identity. Since being or selfhood only is as the other of the other, otherness and difference constitute both poles of identity; thus differentiating, self-related negativity, now as the self-development which unfolds in the concept, is explicit as the truth of identity.

The *unity* of substance ... in positing itself through the moment of absolute negativity ... becomes a *manifested* or *posited identity*, and thereby the *freedom* which is the identity of the concept. The concept, the totality resulting from the reciprocal relation, is the unity of the *two substances* standing in that relation; but in this unity they are now free, for

they no longer possess their identity as something blind ... ; on the contrary the substances now have essentially the status of an *illusory being*, of being moments of reflection, whereby each is no less immediately united with its other or its positedness and each contains its positedness *within itself*, and consequently in its other is posited as simply and solely identical with itself. With the concept, therefore, we have entered the realm of *freedom*.<sup>50</sup>

What is Hegel getting at in this passage's mention of freedom? First, the relation of the two substances in question is one of freedom in that now, for the first time, the difference or distinction or separateness between what is and its other is sustained in identity, rather than disappearing or appearing in an other. Both are free, self-standing, and thus there is no longer a need to relate to a yet to be adequately determined alien other. Consequently there is now a definiteness, a completeness, a finality to determinacy that was not found previously. Freedom is present because of this self-sufficiency and because no *alien* other is involved in the determinacy. Thus the unqualified self-sufficiency of being, what the tradition meant in part by substance, is now disclosed as this freedom which consists in letting the other be, and being in and with the other as one's self, even while remaining differentiated from it. Freedom is also present because this truth about the nature (of substance's) self-sufficiency is only achieved in its sheer differentiating relation to an other which it is at once identical to it even *in* its difference; so nothing is hidden any longer as regards what and how this determinacy is what it is; dependency on a relation to an other is now explicit as a self-dependency: this transparency is freedom as the completeness of accounting for what is in and by just what is fully present and with no reference to heteronomy, to what is a never fully disclosed, alien determiner. The concept both is what it is in its own right and discloses and demonstrates what it is, and this disclosure is the asserted or demonstrated freedom of fully accounting for what is.

How is this metaphysics different from metaphysics hitherto? Reversing the tradition of metaphysics, the concept shows the truth of self-determination to lie in its *inseparability* from other-determination, rather than as the absence or elimination of it: With the concept, self-determined identity (self-related negativity) is nothing but the other of other-determination, where neither side of the relation is already determined prior to or outside of the differentiating, othering relation. So, minimally, this is a metaphysics of freedom as the absence of a hidden or alien determining ground. The truth of what being or substance was all along, namely, illusory being or positedness, is now posited *in* its positedness, its sheer 'insubstantial' character as lacking a given determinate ground. It is the concept's disclosure of this radical 'insubstantiality' of being, the absence of the presence of a determining ground (if I may use the jargon of another philosopher) which

marks logic as the completion *and* transcendence of prior metaphysics. Self-sufficient being is not at all a substance in the traditional sense of a super-abundant exclusionary manifoldness or a totalizing manifestation of ownness; it is not an impenetrable self-sameness achieved through the negation or incorporation of the other. On the contrary, by being absolutely other-determined without any given residue of prior determinacy the self is just finally at one with itself; full self-sufficient determinacy is not an absolute determining ground from which all other determinacy flows, but the explicit disclosure of the *illusoriness* of ground altogether, the self-effected revelation of the mutual insubstantiality of ground and grounded as both sheer posited, illusory being; the truth of Hegelian metaphysics is radically post-Hegelian.<sup>51</sup> Being is not self sufficient as free from the other and as determinative of it, but as free in the other, in a differentiating that both establish and sustain.

Yet how is this also the completion of metaphysics as the basis for articulating the truth of things, rather than the abandonment of objective truth for the abstract negativity of a Nietzschean assertion that all is positedness, illusory being? Why does not Hegel's disclosure of the error of the metaphysics of ground lead to the positing of the arbitrary eruption of will to power as a sheer-positing mechanism? Some of course would say he has led it there and Nietzsche just makes this explicit. But that is a mistake.

For one thing, logic as free self-determining thought has continued and completed metaphysics by establishing what the truth, absolute being, and fully self-determined determinacy, are, and by indicating that (and why) what is perfectly knowable is just what is fully self-determined. Metaphysics is completed because, in the absolute freedom of pure self-determination, knowledge and object are fully adequate to one another. Yet, this is also not a reversion to traditional metaphysics because this is not at the same time a claim that this is how the world of given things appears to us phenomenally (as conscious knowers). Remember, philosophical truth is not the correctness of facts because truth about facts, dependent on determination by a given other, can never be fully established or certified. Nor is this a claim that logic, the concept, is what that given world is in *its* full and independent determinacy, as given independent of self-determining thought. That's replacement theory. Yet, while *absolute* being and truth may be restricted to the self-determination of philosophical thought, Hegel does not restrict philosophical knowledge to purified, solipsistic self-knowledge of logic, and in fact logic's own completion as demanded by the concept opens the way to philosophical cognition of the *other* world of things, the very world phenomenal cognition seeks to but cannot adequately know as it is in-itself. In *Realphilosophie*, logic's consummation as autonomous, fully self-determined, and complete necessitates the pure conceptualizing of logic's other, of a domain of determinacy which is not self-determining determinacy at all. This is a transition which is fully constituted by and based in the very truth

the concept brings to explicit articulation, namely, that self-determining self-sufficiency (the autonomy of logic as a completed whole) requires a *free* relation to an autonomous other. Having posited (relation to other) as the truth of thought in the concept, the concept realizes this truth of its self-determining nature by performing what it has posited. This performance is the 'free release' which Hegel speaks of at the very end of the logic and which is logic's acknowledgment of the autonomous domain of its radical, antithetical other: nature as the domain of the given (where given determinacy may be sustained in its givenness; where otherness may be sustained in its own right.)<sup>52</sup> So logic also completes metaphysics by making it possible for thought (in *Realphilosophie*) to think a domain of determinacy as autonomous from thought in the sense of *not* being the self-determined determinacy of logic. Thought knows what freedom is and that it can attain its own freedom only through acknowledging the freedom of its other. Conditioned in and by freedom alone, logic has conceptualized pure freedom and is thus equipped, and mandated by its own autonomy, to think nature as 'free' in the sense of being what it is, as it is, in itself, and not as determined by thought. It can do this just because it has first established its complete autonomy by *thoroughly* determining what 'being determined by thought' means, thereby freeing thought to now think what '*not* being determined by thought' means. This freeing of thought involves freeing it from the burden of prior metaphysics where thought imposed its determinacy on its other, and thought it as being 'thought-like.' (Of course, as free thought's radical other, nature is thought initially, in its independence from thought, as a domain of unfreedom.) Furthermore, this thinking is part and parcel of logic's establishing its own freedom by completely determining the domain of purely self-determining determinacy; logic's completeness is assured by itself, through itself, by the free release of acknowledging nature as totally other than logical thought.<sup>53</sup> Because of this free release, it is clear that logic is the 'science of things' because it comprehends being in its complete self-sufficiency and also because it makes it possible, in *Realphilosophie*, to conceive of things as they are determined by themselves, as they really are, utterly independent of thought, and absent the distortive assumption of prior metaphysics that things are like thought or thought is like things. But this means that logic does not offer an essence as the ground of appearance, *determining* how things appear to phenomenal cognition, or determining what underlies their appearance as their 'true being.' That is just the logic of heteronomy which Hegel's thought, as the philosophy of freedom, has unequivocally rejected.

## Notes

1. 3 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 242–3 (Elizabeth S. Haldane & Frances H. Simson trans., 1974) [hereinafter cited as *History Lectures*].

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* 13 (J. Sibree trans., 1956 ); see also *id.* ('From now on the principle of the *independence of reason*, or of its absolute inward autonomy, has to be regarded as the universal principle of philosophy, and as one of the assumptions of our times') [hereinafter cited as *PH*]; G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic* § 60 Remark (T. F. Geraets *et al.* trans., 1991) [hereinafter cited as *EL*] ('[T]he loftier business of logic therefore is ... to raise mind to freedom and truth ...'); G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* 37 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*].
3. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 31, 43; see also *EL*, § 19 Remark ('It can, of course, be said that logic is the science of *thinking*, of its *determinations* and *laws*, but thinking as such constitutes only the *universal determinacy* or the *element* in which the Idea is [simply] logical. The Idea is thinking, not as formal thinking, but as the self-developing totality of its own peculiar determinations and laws, which thinking does not already *have* and find given within itself, but which it gives to itself.').
4. Although logic is about 'pure thought,' *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 34, these forms are by no means merely formal; although logic deals with 'pure abstractions,' (*EL*, *supra* note 2, § 19, Remark) they are not without content. *SL*, *supra*, at 50 ('[T]he necessary forms and self-determinations of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself'); see also *id.* at 36–7, 44, 48. Hegel asserts that these are not just forms without content; the essence of things is the concept, the universal, and 'cannot be regarded as *only* an indifferent form attached to a content.' *Id.* at 37. To treat 'the determinations of thought, primarily as forms which are distinct from the matter of thought and only attached to it, this attitude directly reveals itself as intrinsically inadequate for the attainment of truth – and truth is the declared object and aim of logic.' *Id.* at 38.
5. *Id.* at 42, 44. Hegel explicitly criticizes and rejects the view that logic 'can only provide the formal conditions of genuine cognition and cannot in its own self contain any real truth, nor even the *pathway* to the real truth because just that which is essential in truth, its content, lies outside logic.' *Id.* at 44.
6. *Id.* at 63, 70.
7. *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 19, Remark.
8. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 38.
9. *Id.* at 26.
10. *Id.* at 25. Furthermore this 'spiritual life' is 'that through which philosophy constitutes itself ...'. *Id.* at 28.
11. *Id.* at 32. As we will see, this 'supernatural element' is freedom.
12. *Id.* at 28. The 'development of ... natural and spiritual life' as outlined in the *Encyclopedia* is simply the development of freedom, whose definitive and purest mode is articulated in logic.
13. *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 24.
14. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 39 (translation revised). This distinction is crucial and marks an important critical and idealistic dimension in Hegel's philosophy: truth is a normative matter of conceptual thought, not of facts about things as they happen to be given. William Maker, *The Science of Freedom: Hegel's Critical Theory*, 41–2 *Bull. Hegel Society of Great Britain* 1 (2000).
15. Hegel further explains logic's 'task' thus:

The indispensable foundation, the concept, the universal which is the thought itself ... cannot be regarded as *only* an indifferent form attached to a content. But these thoughts of everything natural and spiritual, even the substantial *content* ... are still charged with the difference of a soul and a body, of the con-

cept and a relative reality; the profounder basis is the soul itself, even of the subjective thinking of them. To focus attention on this logical nature which animates mind, moves and works in it, this is the task.

*SL*, *supra* note 2, at 37 (translation revised); 1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft Der Logik* 19 (Georg Lasson ed., 1971).

16. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 49–50.
17. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 34, 28.
18. *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 17 (translation revised).
19. ‘To exhibit the realm of thought philosophically, that is, in its own immanent activity or what is the same, in its necessary development, had therefore to be a fresh undertaking, one that had to be started right from the beginning ...’. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 31; see also *id.* at 27. In *The Philosophy of History*, when discussing ‘our world, our own time,’ he makes clear what this is: the Enlightenment recognizes the validity of reason as authoritative: ‘The absolute criterion – taking the place of all authority based on religious belief and the positive laws of right ... is the verdict passed by Spirit itself on the character of that which is to be believed or obeyed.’ *PH*, *supra* note 1, at 441. This is the ‘position that man’s eternal destiny must be wrought out in himself.’ *Id.* ‘Now, the principle was set up that this import must be capable of actual investigation – something of which I can gain an inward conviction – and that to this basis of inward demonstration every dogma must be referred.’ *Id.* at 442. This ‘principle of thought’ is ‘absolute’ and ‘brings us to *the last stage in History, our world, our time.*’ *Id.* Next he discusses the will willing its own freedom and ‘develop[ing] itself so as to attain a definite form of Freedom.’ *Id.* at 443.

It may however be remarked that the same principle obtained speculative recognition in Germany, in the Kantian philosophy. According to it the simple unity of self-consciousness, the Ego, constitutes the absolutely independent Freedom, and is the fountain of all general conceptions – i.e., all conceptions elaborated by Thought – Theoretical Reason; and likewise of the highest of all practical determinations – Practical Reason, as free will; and Rationality of Will is none other than maintaining one’s self in pure Freedom ... .

*Id.* at 443.

20. ‘However, once the substantial form of the spirit has inwardly reconstituted itself, all attempts to preserve the form of an earlier culture are utterly in vain; like withered leaves they are pushed off by the new buds already growing at their roots.’ *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 26.
21. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 27.
22. See *PH*, *supra* note 2, at 17 (translation revised). See also *id.* at 438–9. (‘But in thought, self moves within the limits of its own sphere; that with which it is occupied—its objects are as absolutely present to it ... for in thinking I must elevate the object to universality. This is utter and absolute freedom ...’. *PH*, *supra* note 2, at 438–9 (translation revised).
23. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 26.
24. *Id.* at 33–34.
25. Speaking of the Enlightenment he notes:

‘The principle is hereby gained, but only the principle of freedom of spirit; and the greatness of our time rests in the fact that freedom, the peculiar possession of mind whereby it is at home with itself in itself, is recognized, and that mind has this consciousness within itself. This however is merely abstract, for the



next step is that the principle of freedom is again purified and comes to its true objectivity, so that not everything which strikes me or springs up within me must, because it is manifested in me, hold good as true. It is only through thought, which casts off the particular and accidental, that the principle receives this objectivity which is independent of mere subjectivity and in and for itself – though in such a way that freedom of mind is still respected.'

*History of Philosophy*, *supra* note 2, at 423.

26. Of Descartes' ego cogito, Hegel remarks: 'In this philosophy has regained its own ground that thought starts from thought as what is certain in itself, and not from something external, not from something given, not from an authority, but directly, from the freedom that is contained in the "I think."' *Id.* at 231–32 (translation revised).

27. *Id.* at. 443. But note Hegel's important qualification:

If other disciples of Kant have expressed themselves concerning the determining of the *object* by the ego in this way, that the objectifying of the ego is to be regarded as an original and necessary act of consciousness ... then this objectifying act, in its freedom from the opposition of consciousness, is nearer to what may be taken simply for *thought* as such. But this act should no longer be called consciousness; consciousness embraces within itself the opposition of the ego and its object which is not present in that original act. The name consciousness gives it a semblance of subjectivity even more than does the term *thought*, which here, however, is to be taken simply in the absolute sense as *infinite* thought untainted by the finitude of consciousness, in short, *thought as such*.

*SL*, *supra* note 2, at 62–63.

28. *Id.* at 36–8, 47.  
 29. *Id.* at 45–6 (translation revised).  
 30. *Id.* at 582.  
 31. *Id.* at 817 (translation revised).  
 32. *Id.* at 816 (translation revised).  
 33. John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1884). ("Beauty is truth, truth beauty," – that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'). For Hegel, of course, beauty and truth are intimately connected. See William Maker, 'Introduction,' in *Hegel and Aesthetics* (William Maker ed., 2000).  
 34. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* 14 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1977) (translation revised) [hereinafter cited as *PhG*].  
 35. *Id.* at 9–10.  
 36. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 577 (translation revised).  
 37. *Id.* at 580.  
 38. *PhG*, *supra* note 34, at 13 (translation revised).  
 39. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.  
 40. *Id.* at 816–17.  
 41. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 49. For an extended consideration of how the *Phenomenology* functions as the introduction to science by effecting this overcoming, see William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* 67–98 (1994).  
 42. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 47.  
 43. *Id.* at 63 (translation revised).

'Further, as regards the *subjective* determinateness of the ego in general, it is true that pure knowing frees the ego from the restricted meaning imposed on its by the insuperable opposition of its object; but for this reason it would be

*superfluous* at least to retain this subjective attitude and the determination of pure knowing as ego. This determination, however, not only introduces the disturbing ambiguity mentioned, but closely examined its also remains a subjective *ego*. The actual development of the science which starts from the ego [i.e. the *Phenomenology*] shows that in that development the object has and retains the perennial character of an other for the ego, and that the ego which formed the starting-point is, therefore, still entangled in the world of appearance and is not in truth the pure knowing which has overcome the opposition of consciousness.'

*Id.* at 77.

44. *Id.* at 77 ('[P]ure knowing [is] where the distinction of subject and object has vanished.').; see also *id.* at 76–7 ('When pure knowing is characterized as ego, its acts as a perpetual reminder of the subjective ego whose limitations should be forgotten. ... This confusion ... only adds to the difficulties involved and tends completely to mislead.'). As I shall argue below, this characterization and the consequent confusion concerning the logic as metaphysics persists in most readings, where its categories are taken directly as such to be about phenomenal things. While 'being' in the logic provides a basis for coming to think about the being of things, it is not as such about beings qua *Gegenstände* but about being which is purely self-determining. For an extended discussion of this issue and how logic leads to (but is not as such) the metaphysics of *Realphilosophie*, see William Maker, *The Very Idea of the Idea of Nature, or Why Hegel Is Not an Idealist*, in *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature 1* (Stephen Houlgate ed., 1998); William Maker, *Idealism and Autonomy*, in 34 *Owl of Minerva* 59 (2002–03). Both address the issue of how the *Realphilosophie* begins as a self-transformation of logical categories.
45. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 64 (translation revised). Speaking of the actual beginning of self-determination Hegel observes:

for only in that which is simple is there nothing more than the pure beginning; only the immediate is simple, for only in the immediate has no advance been made from the *one* to the *other*. Consequently, whatever is intended to be expressed or implied beyond *being*, in the richer forms of representing the absolute or God; this is in the beginning only an empty word and only being; this simple determination which has no other meaning of any kind, this emptiness is therefore simply as such the beginning of philosophy.

*Id.* at 78.

The beginning is *logical* in that it is to be made in the element of thought that is free and for itself, in *pure knowing*.

*Id.* at 68.

46. *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 24.
47. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* § 246 Remark (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1970).
48. In a manner of speaking, but not strictly speaking: consciousness cannot 'exemplify' or 'instantiate' the logic of essence insofar as being conscious involves a host of natural, psychological, social, and other factors which do not and cannot play a determinative role in constituting logic, even while they are the enabling conditions for those of us engaged in logical thought.
49. We can posit a knowable identity only of that which we still, in some sense, differentiate. Hence the metaphysics of identity still operates with the assumption of the fixed or given difference between thought and an object. It is still within

the framework of consciousness; but these are 'errors the refutation of which throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe is *philosophy*, or rather, as they bar the entrance to philosophy, must be discarded at its portals.' *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 45.

50. *Id.* at 581–2 (translation revised).

51. For more on how Hegel has anticipated and in many ways surpassed post-Hegelian postmodernism, rejecting foundationalism and the philosophy of the subject without lapsing into relativism or nihilism, see Maker, *supra* note 41.

52. *SL*, *supra* note 2, 843. How the resources of logical determinacy are transformed by being 'thought in otherness' such that the initial determinacy of the idea of nature is conceptualized is explored in detail in Maker, *supra* note 44.

53. If logic somehow continued as logic into *Realphilosophie* as its determining ground, logic itself would be both incomplete and dependent upon determination from without, it would not be autonomous and self-determined, and consequently it would not be the very science Hegel claims it is. But as is clear, these are features of the heteronomous thinking Hegel unequivocally rejects. For more on this point see Maker, *supra* note 44.

As Hegel indicates in the *Philosophy of Nature*, philosophical thought requires no externally given resources to determine the idea of nature, but may find them useful for purposes of its preparation and exposition. *Philosophy of Nature*, *supra* note 47, § 246 Remark.

# 2

## Why Hegel's Concept Is Not the Essence of Things

*Stephen Houlgate*

### The project of Hegel's logic

Hegel's *Logic* is both a logic and an ontology. It uncovers the fundamental categories of thought *and* the inherent structure of being itself. In the course of the *Logic*, being proves to be not just pure being, but becoming, quantity, substance and, eventually, concept (*Begriff*). Being-as-concept in turn proves to be objectivity and being-as-Idea. The Idea then finally discloses itself to be nature. What there proves to *be*, therefore, is not just pure being or pure substance or even pure concept, but space, time and matter.

Note that, on my interpretation, nothing actually exists prior to nature: there is no being or quantity or substance before there is space and time. As Hegel puts it, 'nature is the first in point of time.'<sup>1</sup> The *Science of Logic* demonstrates, however, that nature is made necessary by the inherent logic of being itself. In that sense, the logic of being can be said to 'ground' nature. Yet logic is neither the transcendent ground nor creator of nature (in the manner, say, of Leibniz's God), since it does not actually *precede* nature itself. Rather, it is immanent in the very nature it grounds. In Spinoza's terminology, logic is 'the immanent, not the transitive, cause' of nature.<sup>2</sup>

Hegel's ontological logic thus explains why being is in truth nothing less than nature. In the course of this logic, there are numerous significant transitions; but the one that concerns me here is the transition from substance to *concept*. This move, in my view, is a watershed in the *Logic* because it is the move in which the true nature of being is first disclosed. In this move, being shows itself not just to be immediately given quality or quantity, nor just to be that which is produced or 'posited' by essence or substance, nor indeed just to be that essence or substance itself, but to be wholly *self-determining* and *self-developing* being. Being-as-concept will, of course, determine itself further to be syllogism, objectivity, Idea and nature. Yet it will never cease being self-determining. In this sense, rational, conceptual self-determination, not mere immediacy or positedness or positing, constitutes the true character of being (and thus of nature and spirit).

In Hegel's view, since the self-determining concept emerges logically from 'immediate being' and 'essence,' it must include both within itself. They are contained in the concept, however, 'no longer as *being* and *essence*.'<sup>3</sup> What this means, as I understand it, is this: the concept has the simple *self-relation* that characterises immediate being, and it also incorporates the sheer *negativity* or 'reflexion' that characterises essence; but the concept is not itself mere being or essence, nor do its moments stand in a purely immediate or purely reflexive relation to one another. The concept, therefore, is a new structure that emerges logically from being and essence (and preserves aspects of both) but is reducible to neither.<sup>4</sup>

As the concept determines itself further to be *more* than mere concept, the various determinations of immediate being and essence are in fact restored in all their earlier glory. In mechanism, for example, the concept invests itself with the immediacy and indifference of simple being and turns into the realm of independent mechanical objects;<sup>5</sup> and in chemism the objectified concept exhibits the inherent relationality of essence.<sup>6</sup> When the concept – or the Idea – finally discloses itself to be nature, quantity, measure and a whole host of determinations of essence are also restored. Being is never again pure being or pure essence, but is always minimally concept or Idea. Nonetheless, nature proves to be both self-determining (for example, in so far as it establishes its own laws) and quantitative, qualitative and reflexive (in so far as it is mechanical, physical and chemical matter).

The fact that the concept gives itself the form of immediate being or essence should not, however, obscure the equally important fact that the logical structure of the concept itself is different from and irreducible to that of simple being or essence. The concept is self-determining, self-developing being. As such, it is not mere immediate being. More importantly for my purposes, it is not the mere *essence* of things, either. Yet there is a problem: for in the *Logic* Hegel describes the concept in explicitly essentialist terms as the ultimate 'foundation' (*Grundlage*) and as the '*substance* of its determinations.'<sup>7</sup> In view of these potentially misleading remarks, it is crucial that we try to clarify more fully the precise difference between 'concept' and 'essence.'

### The nature of essence

Essence, Hegel writes, is the '*first negation of being*.'<sup>8</sup> It is that being in relation to which immediate being is reduced to mere illusion or *Schein*. Yet essence is not just the simple negation of being: it is also the negativity or 'reflexion' that actually creates the illusion of immediacy. Indeed, essence does not just create the *illusion* of being, in Hegel's view; it actually generates *being itself*. Essence is the pure negativity that has nothing outside itself that it negates. As such, however, it brings *being* into being. It is, as Hegel

puts it, the ‘movement of nothing to nothing’ *by virtue of which* there is and must be being.<sup>9</sup> The being that is generated through essential negativity is real, not illusory: it is the world we see around us. Its simple immediacy is, however, an illusion, since it is in fact *mediated* by the negativity of essence. Essence understood in this way is the movement of producing or *positing* being: what Hegel calls ‘positing reflexion’ (*setzende Reflexion*). The being that is posited thereby is called – unsurprisingly – ‘posited being’ or ‘positedness’ (*Gesetzsein*).<sup>10</sup>

This relation between positing and positedness is definitive of all the categories of essence. Note that positing is different from positedness. At the same time, however, positing is nothing but the positing *of* positedness: it is positing, therefore, only *in bringing* posited being into being. In this sense, positing and positedness are not simply different but form an indissoluble unity. Yet the difference between them is not altogether eliminated: for positedness necessarily points back to a positing that is logically *prior* to it and to which it is indebted.

Positing is thus a deeply paradoxical movement: for it *is not* simply prior to positedness, but only *comes to be* prior to positedness in and through the activity of producing that positedness. It does not simply come first, but, as it were, *ends up* preceding what it posits. This strange movement is seen at various points throughout the logic of essence. Ground, for example, only comes to be a prior ground as the grounded moment emerges. Similarly, force only proves to be the force that it is in its expression; possibility only proves to be real possibility when actualised; and, of course, a cause only comes to be a cause in actually producing its effect. In the sphere of essence, therefore, there is no purely linear development: rather the active moment of positing only comes to precede (or to have preceded) the moment of positedness when that positedness is actually being posited. This reflects the paradox at the heart of essence itself: for essence is that which is primary and prior to being, but that which only turns out *at the end* to have come first. It is that to which posited being can only ever *point back*.

This leads to a further distinctive feature of essence. Essence is the relation of two terms, each of which is *not* the other, but each of which is a constitutive moment of the other. The positing moment is not the posited moment; yet positing is nothing but the positing of positedness, and positedness is equally the result of a prior positing. The categories of being – in particular those of quality – pass over into one another, but remain immediately distinct.<sup>11</sup> Something proves to be other than something else; but being ‘something’ and being ‘other’ remain two quite distinct and separate determinations. In the sphere of essence the relation between categories is subtly different. Here categories come in pairs, such that one is explicitly *included* in the other as *excluded* from it. The one does not just pass over into the other, but each is present *in* the other as *not* actually present in or part of it. Identity, for example, includes difference as the *non-*

identity to which it is absolutely opposed. Similarly, the cause includes its effect as that which is quite different from the cause.

This feature of being included in the other as excluded is what Hegel has in mind when he speaks in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* of determinations of reflexion 'shining' or 'seeming' to be within what is opposed to them – that is, when he refers to their '*Scheinen in dem Entgegengesetzten*' or '*Scheinen in Anderes*.'<sup>12</sup> Each determination is different from and opposed to the other. Yet each is also (as Derrida might put it) 'haunted' by the other within itself, since it is mediated by and dependent on that opposed and excluded other. Each is internally connected to the other it opposes, because it owes its own character to the mediation of that other.

In every pair of essential or reflexive categories there is a positing moment and a posited moment. Yet each of these moments is mediated by the other. The positing moment (for example, the 'ground' or 'force') is thus itself dependent upon the posited moment (the 'effect' or 'expression'). For Hegel, this is the paradox at the heart of essence: all essential positing is actually made possible by the very positedness to which it gives rise.

What I have given here is a very crude and simplified account of the nature of essence. I do not deny that there are important differences between different pairs of essential or reflexive categories. The relation between identity and difference, for example, is not the same as that between ground and grounded; and the ground relation is not the same as that between substance and its accidents or between cause and its effect. Nonetheless, all categories of essence are constituted by a reflexive relation. Each is internally related to an other through which it is what it is. From within itself, therefore, each *points back* to what posits it or to that which makes its own positing possible.

## From substance and causality to concept

Having now shed some light on the nature of essence, we need to trace briefly the logical transition from substance and causality – the final determinations of essence – to the *concept*. For the purposes of this discussion I will draw on Hegel's own summary of this transition in the section entitled 'The Concept in General.'

In the final chapter of the logic of essence, Hegel argues that substance mutates logically into the relation between an active and a passive substance. The passive substance is presupposed by the active substance as that upon which it is to act. The active substance is '*self-related negativity*' that acts on and causes a change in the passive substance.<sup>13</sup> There are several things to note about the actual action of the active substance on the passive substance.<sup>14</sup>

First, the active substance comes to be an active cause only *in* its action on the passive substance, that is to say, only *in* producing its effect. Prior to

causing its effect, the active substance is not actually a cause. Second, the passive substance only comes to be passive in being acted upon. It is rendered passive – is posited as passive – *by* the active substance alone.<sup>15</sup>

What is being described here is the simple causal relation as such. As one can see, this remains firmly within the sphere of essence: for only in producing an effect in the passive substance does the active substance actually *become* the cause to which that effect points back. Hegel moves on, however, to note something else about this relation. He points out that through its action the active substance *changes* and negates the passive substance. This change has the effect of rendering the passive substance no longer merely passive but active in its own right. Through the causal activity of the active substance the passive substance thus itself becomes active in relation to that active substance. It acts back on that substance and turns simple one-way causality into *reciprocal* causality. In Hegel's own words:

the cause acts on the passive substance and *alters* its determination; ... the other determination, however, that [the passive substance] receives is causality; the passive substance therefore becomes cause, power and activity.<sup>16</sup>

This is the decisive move that takes us forward to the concept: for it introduces the strict *identity* of the positing and posited moments. In simple causality, the cause comes to be a cause in producing its effect. But the effect – the posited moment – remains different from and points back to the cause – the positing moment. In reciprocal causality the situation is different. What happens here is not only that the cause comes to be a cause in producing its effect, but that that effect is *itself* nothing but further causality. Causality not only comes to be the cause *of* its effect, therefore; it emerges as *the effect itself*. This second causality is not one to which the effect points back, but is *identical* with that effect. It *is* that effect and so is a positing that is itself positedness.

Similarly, the passive substance comes to be explicitly passive or explicitly posited being by becoming *active* and *causal*. Its passivity or positedness is thus identical with its active positing, and its positing is identical with its positedness: that is to say, its positing is a *posited* positing – a causality that is itself the effect of a cause. At this point, we see that the difference between positing and positedness, and the priority of the former over the latter that characterises all essential relations, is undermined and the two are revealed to be identical: causality is itself an effect, and passivity is itself activity. With this *identity* of positing and posited being, we move from the sphere of essence into a new realm of being: that of the concept. In essence, positedness itself makes positing possible, but it also points back to such positing: expression points back to the force that expresses itself, the accidents point back to their indwelling substance, and



of course the effect points back to its cause. In the new sphere of the concept, however, 'being is in and for itself only in so far as it *is* posited being' itself.<sup>17</sup> The concept, therefore, is not that to which its different determinations point back, but that which is what it is *in* and *as* those differences alone.

This, in my view, is the principal difference between Hegel and Spinoza. For Spinoza, being is ultimately substance that is immanent in but also logically *prior* to its modes: it is the immanent *cause* of its modes. For Hegel, by contrast, being is ultimately concept that is wholly identical with its unfolding differences. Those differences belong to and constitute the concept itself. The concept is thus not their logically prior 'ground' or 'cause': it is simply the process of differentiating itself into those differences.

Note that Hegel does not merely oppose the concept to Spinozan substance. He argues that when it is understood properly, substance (and the reciprocal causality which, in his view, it makes necessary) *manifests itself* in truth to be the freely self-determining and self-differentiating concept.<sup>18</sup> Since the concept is what substance proves in truth to be, substance and the other determinations of reflexion can themselves be regarded as aspects of, or better, as underdeterminations of, the concept. It is permissible, therefore, to think of the concept as the 'absolute foundation' or the 'substance of its determinations' – or to think of the Idea as the 'immanent cause' or 'creator' of nature<sup>19</sup> – provided that one recognises this to be an imprecise way of thinking and speaking. One should thus perhaps put such words as 'foundation' or 'substance' in scare quotes or use them, as Derrida phrases it, 'under erasure,' because in truth the concept is *not* the essence or substance of being to which beings point back, but simply freely self-determining and self-differentiating being itself.

## The concept

My aim in the rest of this chapter is not to provide a detailed and exhaustive account of the structure of the concept. It is merely to indicate a little more fully how the concept differs from essence. In essence, as we have seen, the moment of positedness refers back to the moment that posits it. In the concept, by contrast, the moment of positedness is *identical* with that through which it arises.<sup>20</sup> As a result of this identity, however, the moments involved are no longer quite the same as they were in the sphere of essence. The positedness that owes its existence to the concept is not posited by something different from itself and so is not, strictly speaking, *posited* being at all. It is, rather, the difference and determinacy that the concept determines *itself* to be. As Hegel puts it, 'the side which was previously called *positedness*' is now constituted by 'the difference and the determinations which the concept *gives itself* in its distinguishing.'<sup>21</sup> Since these differences are identical with the concept itself, the concept has no identity

'before,' 'behind' or 'beneath' them; it is not their foundation, ground or cause. Rather, 'the *different moments* of the concept are themselves the *whole concept*.'<sup>22</sup>

Let us look more closely at what this means. The concept, for Hegel, is purely self-relating, self-identical being. But it is equally determinate and differentiated in itself. Indeed, it is self-relating and self-identical only *in being* internally differentiated and determinate.<sup>23</sup> As such, Hegel tells us, the concept is *universal*. The universal is thus 'simplicity which ... contains *within itself* difference and determinateness in the highest degree.'<sup>24</sup> Note that the universal is not the pure undifferentiated being with which the *Logic* begins; nor is it mere identity which is internally related to difference and within which difference is included as excluded. The universal is being that is genuinely differentiated in itself and that relates to itself only in and through its own differences. It is being that, as Hegel puts it, '*continues itself*' through all its differences and 'possesses the power of unalterable, undying self-preservation.'<sup>25</sup>

The determinations that constitute the universal are genuinely different from one another. They do not just tediously repeat the same structure of being, but are new and distinctive determinations. They are, of course, universality itself, particularity and individuality. The universal concept is not, therefore, universal all by itself. It is universal in determining itself to be particularity and individuality and continuing itself therein. As such, the universal is the logical process of self-determination, self-differentiation and *development*. Qualitative being passes over into its immediate other, and essential determinations posit one another, but the universal concept *develops* logically into new and different determinations of *itself*.

Each moment of the concept is thus the whole concept in a different form or with a different emphasis.<sup>26</sup> The universal is *self-relating* being that continues in its differences: it is thus one, single self-identical being. Particularity, on the other hand, is that same universal explicitly differentiated into two (or more) contrasting moments – into *this* in contrast to *that*. Individuality, finally, is this explicitly differentiated and determinate universal, understood as reflected back into itself and thus as free standing. It is the universal that has become '*absolute determinacy*' (*absolute Bestimmtheit*).<sup>27</sup> The universal, for Hegel is thus not just static, but is the logical process of particularising and individuating itself.

This logical structure clearly distinguishes the concept from essence. Essence, even as substance, is not simply the unfolding of its differences, but stands in *relation* to them. That relation is one of logical priority and dominance: essence governs and is the power over what it posits (even if its power is itself mediated by and dependent on what it governs). Indeed, when essence proves to be causality, its power turns into force or 'violence' (*Gewalt*) that is exercised by one substance on another.<sup>28</sup>

The concept, by contrast, does not stand in any 'relation' to its differences through which it might dominate or govern them. It does not impose its identity on those differences or violate them in any way. (In this sense, Nietzsche and Levinas could not be more wrong.) Rather, the concept *lets* its differences emerge from its own identity. Indeed, it enjoys its identity only in letting those differences emerge as genuine differences and so letting itself become differentiated. The concept, however, is not indifferent to particularity and individuality. Rather, it continues itself in that particularity and individuality and so 'is, in its other, in peaceful communion with itself.'<sup>29</sup> As John Burbidge aptly puts it, the universal overreaches its other, 'not by force, but by quietly being present in it.'<sup>30</sup> As such, Hegel writes, the concept can be called '*free love and boundless blessedness*.'<sup>31</sup> This explains in part why Hegel privileges Christianity over other religions: for Christianity pictures the concept precisely as a God of love rather than of dominance and control.

The freely self-determining concept is what being turns out in the end to be, after it has shown itself to be quality, quantity, measure and essence. Self-determination is the true nature of being that is not explicit at the start. Unlike essence, however, the concept, once it has emerged, does not claim to have been that which, behind the scenes, actually determined the development of being from the start. In that sense, Hegel's statement that the concept proves to be the 'absolute foundation' of being and essence is misleading.<sup>32</sup> When being proves to be concept, the determinations of immediate being and essence do, indeed, show themselves retrospectively to have been *concepts*, rather than merely immediate or reflexive determinations.<sup>33</sup> They do not, however, turn out to have been under the sway of an all-powerful concept that determined behind their backs how they would develop. They turn out, rather, to have been the initial, abstract forms *of* the concept itself, that is, to be the concept itself in an under-developed form. With the move into the sphere of the concept, the transitions of being and the reflexive positings of essence are thus revealed to have been the initial ways in which the concept freely determined itself and set itself on the path towards becoming explicitly self-determining. It is important to recognise, however, that the initial stirrings of the concept are nothing beyond the logical moves generated immanently by being and essence. The concept to begin with *is* nothing but being and essence. There is, therefore, no omnipotent concept operating behind the scenes in the earlier parts of the *Logic* (or indeed anywhere else in Hegel's system). To think of the concept in that way is to turn it into essence.

## Immanence

Before I conclude, there is a further point I wish to make. The concept is the logical process of explicit self-determination and continuous develop-

ment. In the course of that very process, however, the concept actually comes to suspend its own developmental character: for it proves to be not merely the universal that develops *into* individuality, but the universal that *is* nothing apart from individuality itself. The universal turns out, in other words, not simply to be first universal and then individuated, but to be nothing but *individuated* universality. What Hegel says of the particular universal, 'animal,' is true also of the universal as such: "'The animal'", he says, 'does not exist; on the contrary, this expression refers to the universal nature of individual (*einzelne*) animals.'<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, I would argue, the concept proves to be not first concept and then objectivity, but to be nothing apart from objectivity itself. The concept, therefore, does not simply develop *into* objectivity; rather, through its logical development, the concept proves to *be* nothing less than objectivity itself. I would also argue that the same applies in the case of nature. The concept – or the Idea – does not simply develop into nature; rather, the Idea, through its logical development, proves to *be* nothing less than nature itself. The concept or the Idea – that is to say, reason – is thus, as Hegel puts it, 'the soul of the world, [it] inhabits it, and is immanent in it, as its own, innermost nature, its universal.'<sup>35</sup>

The concept and the Idea thus do not actually precede nature. They are certainly not its prior 'ground' or 'cause'; but nor are they simply the universal that develops *into* nature. They are, rather, being that determines itself logically to *be* nature. The concept and the Idea do, indeed, 'precede' nature in the sense that being proves logically to be concept and Idea before it proves to be nature. Yet *precisely because of* the way in which they develop logically, it turns out that there is actually no concept or Idea prior to nature after all. The concept and the Idea thus determine themselves to be *immanent* in nature itself. Like Spinoza, Hegel is unquestionably a philosopher of immanence, rather than transcendence. Unlike Spinoza, however, Hegel understands the world to be embodied reason itself, rather than the 'effect' of an immanent substantial 'cause.' Hegel's thought could thus be said to be Spinozan metaphysics, freed from the dominance of essence.

As I noted earlier, however, reflexive determinations and essential relations (as well as quality, quantity and measure) do form part of the realm of nature that the concept or Idea constitutes: nature, for example, is just as much the realm of contingency as of rational self-development. The concept becomes fully and explicitly self-determining only when nature gives rise to self-conscious spirit.<sup>36</sup> Even in the realm of spirit, however, the concept takes on a partly reflexive or 'substantial' form: for example, as ethical substance or the 'external' state.<sup>37</sup> It is not the case, therefore, that once we have recognised being to be concept the determinations of essence and immediate being fall away forever. Being ultimately proves, however, not to be mere essence or the absolute or substance, but to be conceptual self-determination that incorporates immediate and essential differences among

its differences. This is why, in Hegel's view, the determinations of being, essence and concept all form part of the inner logical 'framework' (*Gerüst*) of spirit and the world.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

Much of what I have said will no doubt strike readers as obvious. It is not obvious, however, to many of Hegel's subsequent critics. Marx, for example, asserted that, for Hegel, the Idea is 'an independent subject ..., the demiurgos of the real world,' and that 'the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea."' <sup>39</sup> A similar interpretation of Hegel can be found in other post-Hegelian writers (including Nietzsche). Charles Taylor rightly sees in Hegel a trenchant critic of 'reality-behind-appearance' dualism. Yet, when he reaches Hegel's analysis of the concept in the *Science of Logic*, he also employs (without scare quotes) the inappropriate vocabulary of essentialism. For Taylor, the basic Hegelian ontological vision is thus 'that the Concept *underlies* everything as the inner necessity which deploys the world. ... We are the vehicles whereby this *underlying* necessity comes to its equally necessary self-consciousness.' <sup>40</sup>

I hope that I have shown that this essentialist (and foundationalist) interpretation of Hegel is deeply misleading. Strictly speaking, Hegel's concept is not the underlying (or indwelling) 'ground,' 'cause' or 'substance' of the world; nor is it a 'force' within the world, or the 'condition' of the world's 'possibility' (whether that condition be thought of as transcendental, existential or logical). The concept, for Hegel, is not anything to which being *points back*. It is simply self-determining being itself – being that determines itself logically to be nothing less than nature and spirit.

Hegel, in my view, is without doubt an ontological thinker. The concept is not just the categorial framework that *we* employ to make sense of the world. The concept is the true nature of being itself. It is important to remember, however, that it is *not* the 'essence' of things.<sup>41</sup>

## Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §248 addition, at 19 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1970).
2. *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works* 100 (Edwin M. Curley ed., 1994).
3. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 577 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) (hereinafter cited as *SL*). For the German text, see G.W.F. Hegel, 2 *Wissenschaft der Logik* 245, in 5–6 *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* (Eva Moldenhauer and Karl M. Michel eds, 1969).
4. Contrast Rüdiger Bubner, *Zur Sache der Dialektik* 76 (1980) ('The logic of the concept announces *no new topic*') ('*Die Begriffslogik kündigt kein neues Thema an*').
5. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 711–12; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 409–10.

6. See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic* §202, at 278 (T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, & H.S. Harris eds, 1991) (hereinafter cited as *EL*). For the German text, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse: Erster Teil: Wissenschaft der logik*, in *8 Werke in zwanzig Bänden* 358 (Eva Moldenhauer & Karl M. Michel eds, 1969).
7. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 577, 603; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 245, 276.
8. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 391; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 16.
9. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 400; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 24.
10. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 400–01; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 25–6.
11. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 123; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 133.
12. *EL*, *supra* note 6, at 237, 306; *EW*, *supra* note 6, §§161, 240, at 308, 291.
13. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 578; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 247.
14. For a more detailed study of Hegel's account of substance and causality, see Stephen Houlgate, *Substance, Causality, and the Question of Method in Hegel's Science of Logic*, in *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel* 232 (Sally Sedgwick ed., 2000).
15. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 579; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 247.
16. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 579; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 247.
17. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 580; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 248 (emphasis added).
18. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 580; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 249.
19. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 592; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 265.
20. See Richard Winfield, *Concept, Individuality and Truth*, 39–40 *Bull. Hegel Society G.B.* 39 (1999), where Winfield argues that the logic of the concept achieves 'an identity between what is determined and what does the determining.'
21. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 600; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 273 (emphasis added).
22. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 596; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 270.
23. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 582, 602; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 251–2, 275.
24. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 601; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 275.
25. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 602; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 276.
26. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 600; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 273.
27. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 603; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 277.
28. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 567; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 235.
29. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 603; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 277.
30. John Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* 113 (1981).
31. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 603; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 277.
32. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 577; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 245.
33. *EL*, *supra* note 6, at 238; *EW*, *supra* note 6, § 162 Remark, at 310.
34. *EL*, *supra* note 6, at 56; *EW*, *supra* note 6, § 24 addition, at 82.
35. *EL*, *supra* note 6, at 56; *EW*, *supra* note 6, § 24 addition, at 82; see Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* 181 (1986).
36. See *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 583; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 253.
37. See, e.g., G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* §§146, 183–4, at 190, 221 (Allen W. Wood & H.B. Nisbet trans., 1991).
38. *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 586; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 3, at 257.
39. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* 457 (David McLellan ed., 2000).
40. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* 299–300 (1975) (emphasis added).
41. For a related discussion, see also Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel's Critique of Foundationalism in the 'Doctrine of Essence,'* in *German Philosophy Since Kant* 25–45. (Anthony O' Hear ed., 1999).

# 3

## Hegel's Anti-Spinozism: The Transition to Subjective Logic and the End of Classical Metaphysics

*George di Giovanni\**

The title of this chapter is deliberately but also dangerously provocative.<sup>1</sup> Hegel is famously the philosopher who negates only for the sake of reaffirming at a more elevated level of comprehension whatever is being negated. Anyone who announces the anti-Spinozism of Hegel or, with reference to him, speaks of the end of classical metaphysics, must do so, therefore, at his own risk. This warning applies with special force when, as in the present chapter, the transition from Objective to Subjective Logic is the issue. In the Introduction to Book III of the *Greater Logic*, Hegel goes out of his way to point out that, although he has called attention at the conclusion of Book II to some imperfections of Spinoza's system, the recognition of such imperfections is not the same as refuting the system itself. An effective refutation requires that the internal logic of the system and its necessity to the development of Spirit should first be recognized. The need to transcend it should then be demonstrated on the strength of precisely that internal logic. Spinoza's system is false only because it pretends to be the final system. To refute it only means, really, to transcend it.<sup>2</sup>

It might, therefore, be just as legitimate and instructive to say that, contrary to what the title of this paper announces, Hegel is in some sense both a Spinozist and a consummate classical metaphysician. Perhaps. (Incidentally, I mention Spinoza and classical metaphysics in one breath because, since Jacobi, everybody at the time assumed, Hegel included, that Spinozism had brought metaphysics to its logical conclusion. To speak of the one was to speak of the other.) In the present chapter, however, I stand by my negative claims – for two reasons that are doxographical, as well as conceptual. The first is that Hegel does not say that Spinozism cannot be refuted. He says that it can be refuted only by being transcended internally.<sup>3</sup> This transcendence, inasmuch as it constitutes a refutation, must entail a moment of negation. And we all know that for Hegel negation must be serious if the dialectic is to move at all. In what follows, I wish to document precisely the death of Spinozism, and of classical metaphysics, at the hand of Hegel. I shall sound a positive note only at the end, and even then it will be just a note.



The second reason is that when, in the 1816 Introduction to Book III of the *Logic*, Hegel complained about those who had argued that Spinozism cannot be refuted except by first assuming ‘as an established fact [which Spinoza himself denied] the freedom and the self-subsistence of the self-conscious subject,’<sup>4</sup> Hegel was tacitly referring to Fichte. That was indeed how Fichte had made his stand against the naturalism of Spinoza in 1797, when he was still professing at Jena.<sup>5</sup> However, starting just before 1810 and until his premature death in 1814, Fichte had again been lecturing on his *Wissenschaftslehre* in Berlin.<sup>6</sup> And in his lectures, though by no means repudiating the standpoint that had governed his Science from the beginning, he now presented this Science as a revised form of Spinoza’s system. Schelling was Fichte’s intended target of criticism. Fichte’s main objection against him was precisely that, though a self-professed Spinozist, Schelling misunderstood his mentor.<sup>7</sup> In other words, around 1810 Fichte was trying to revise Spinoza’s system from within, by transcending it according to its internal logic – exactly how Hegel says it should be done – in order to refute it. Now, it is very unlikely that Hegel knew of Fichte’s lectures while he was working on his three Books of the *Logic* in Nürnberg, or Fichte of Hegel’s logical efforts. To be sure, although only recently recovered and made available to us, notes of Fichte’s lectures were widely circulated in Berlin, and Hegel must certainly have become acquainted with them when he moved there four years after Fichte’s death. By that time, however, the last Book of his *Logic* had already been published. Be that as it may, quite apart from any question of who knew of whom and of what, it is remarkable that, as Rüdiger Bubner has recently pointed out, Hegel’s *Logic of Essence* was in fact a very subtle and sustained argument against Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in his treatment of the modal categories in the transition from Objective to Subjective Logic, Hegel was defining his position in relation to Spinoza in Nürnberg just as, at the same time, Fichte was doing it in Berlin. And, in thus defining his position, Hegel seemed to be deliberately countering Fichte’s position. Hegel, not Fichte, is my topic here. But, in what follows, I shall also bring Fichte into the picture. He will be my foil for highlighting just how, in Nürnberg, Hegel finally transcended Spinoza and put an end to classical metaphysics. At the same time in Berlin – I shall want to say – Fichte was to fail in this same effort.

### Fichte and Hegel as Post-Kantians

First, let me be clear in what sense Fichte and Hegel were both post-Kantians and were both promoting the programme of Idealism. Spinoza will soon come on the scene to set them apart. The main point is that for both, thought is *a priori*. This means, in effect, that the universe of meaning is conceptually constituted and that, as so constituted, it stands on its own as a self-contained, intentional organism, independent of any antecedent it



might have had in natural existence. It is as if a leap had occurred creating an irreducible hiatus between this universe of meaning and its antecedent. Phenomena refer, first and foremost, only to themselves. This does not mean that the supposed antecedent is not in some sense real, or that the relation that intentional phenomena still bear to it is not problematic. The point is rather that, whatever this reality might be in itself – assuming that it has an ‘in itself’ – it has standing within the universe of meaning only to the extent that it has already been informed as an element internal to the structure of the latter. Its relation to it has become itself a problem internal to it. The main tenet of Idealism is that the relating of phenomenal world and external being has to be done phenomenally from within the context of meaningful intentions. It is the task, precisely, of both the *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's Logic.<sup>9</sup>

The problem that the task poses is also the same in both. We can see it already clearly delineated in principle in both Fichte's and Hegel's analysis of the concept of *appearance*, and then explicitly stated in their subsequent treatment of the modal categories. Appearance has being only inasmuch as appearance internally refers to being as lying outside whichever determination appearance might exhibit at the moment, with the result that any such determination assumes the character of a mere *seeming of being*. And this ‘pointing to being beyond itself,’ and the consequent dissolution of appearance into mere *seeming*, is an event that repeats itself indefinitely.<sup>10</sup> I should note that I am using appearance in the present context in a very broad sense, as a common point of reference for both Fichte and Hegel, and eventually for Spinoza as well. So far as Hegel himself is concerned, to be exact, one must say that seeming (*Schein*) is the starting point of Hegel's logic of reflection;<sup>11</sup> appearance, in Hegel's specific sense of the term, is on the contrary already a much more developed objective configuration. If I am allowed a certain latitude of expression, the point now is that appearance – thus broadly understood – is for both Fichte and Hegel a totally unstable objective configuration that, taken by itself, preempts the constitution of stable objects. To bring firm limits to it, and thereby to allow for the constitution of a well-articulated universe of meaning, is precisely the problem that must be resolved by both Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's Logic.

The strategy that Fichte and Hegel adopt in meeting this challenge differs, not just in details (a circumstance that we shall have to ignore in the present context), but, as we shall see in a moment, also in fundamental assumptions. Right now, however, I am concentrating on what makes these two post-Kantian Idealists. If appearance were the only objective configuration of being, it would be impossible to draw meaningful distinctions between what is, and what is not, the case. That is, meaningful discourse would not be possible. But there is such a discourse. The move that both Fichte and Hegel therefore repeatedly make, starting from appearance, is to

introduce a priori, by way of reflection, objective configurations that reflectively contain within themselves the distinction between being and its appearance – the same distinction which, if not thus reflectively contained, would dissolve the presence of being in appearance into an illusionary presence (i.e. *ein Schein*.) Such more complex configurations provide new contexts for this otherwise evanescent appearance of being that bring limits to it, and therefore allow determinate discourse about it. Contrasted with these contexts, which are assumed in each case as presupposed, the original appearance of being is revealed for what it is – namely, a product of mere abstraction.

Hegel proceeds in the Logic to introduce these ever more complex and new objective configurations with meticulous precision; in each case assuming as presupposed just enough of a new conceptual complexity to resolve whichever problem (i.e. whichever renewed threat of a slide into mere seeming) a given configuration presents at the moment. From the first configuration as defined by the distinction between the *essential* and the *non-essential*, Hegel proceeds (*passim*) to the distinction of *ground* and *grounded*, of *thing* and its appearance, of *substance* and *accidents*, all the way to the distinctions that define the modal categories. In between, Hegel re-appropriates for his Logic all the categories of classical metaphysics.

Fichte's procedure is considerably different, mostly because – for an important reason that will emerge in due time – his *Wissenschaftslehre* is phenomenology and logic at once. There is nonetheless at least one important point in common between the *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's Logic. *Being* in the guise of mere appearance, or as a seeming of being, is for both a reflective object. I mean, in being whatever it is, its being immediately slides into something else. And this slide does not simply occur to *appearing being* externally it constitutes what it is – it is explicit in it (*an ihm*) . It follows that whatever determination appearance might transitorily present, carries the character of immediacy internally. The determination presents itself, and has to be taken, for just what it happens to be. *Immediate* and *immediacy* is Hegel's language for this condition.<sup>12</sup> In parallel contexts, Fichte uses the more phenomenological language of *fact* and *facticity* (*Fakticität*).<sup>13</sup> In either case, whether one speaks of immediacy or facticity, in appearing being presents itself at once as *contingent* and *necessary*; contingent, because it might as well be present under some other determination; and necessary, because whichever determination it happens to display is an ineluctable event, impossible to abrogate once it occurs. It is as if in appearing being held out the promise of an explanation for its present determination, which it however also hides as it immediately slides into some other determination.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, the task of both the *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's Logic of containing the tendency of appearing being to collapse into a mere seeming is really one of overcoming the internalized immediacy of appearing being. Fichte, using his own language, is explicit on this point. As he says,

the *Wissenschaftstheorie* comes to a resolution only when facticity is shown to be a derived product, and the sensory illusion of solidity and the fascination that the world of the senses holds for the unwary is thereby dispelled.<sup>15</sup> Hegel has already accomplished this task in the *Phenomenology*. Within the context of the *Logic*, however, there still arises the parallel task of showing how, as ever more complex objective configurations are introduced, the immediacy that affects the terms of the various relations displayed in them is progressively absorbed within the relations themselves. These relations, as we have just said, idealize the otherwise indefinite movement outside itself that defines appearing being. But immediacy still affects the terms in which they are stated, as for instance in the relation of ground to grounded, or *cause* to *effect*, where these terms are introduced only as presuppositions. When the otherwise purely formal relations connecting them is translated into the schema of a real world – when the formal relation is *realized*, to use Hegel's own language – what counts as ground or cause in one context can just as well serve as grounded or as effect in another.<sup>16</sup> A distinction between form and content that would indeed give renewed credibility to the would-be solidity of sense experience thus reasserts itself. Now, Hegel overcomes this repeated outbreak of immediacy, not by assuming some intended ultimate term of reference – this would mark a relapse into dogmatic metaphysics – but by introducing new relations in which the assumed terms are progressively defined by the relation connecting them by progressively absorbing them into the relation, so to speak. Thus, by stating one term, one has already analytically brought onstage all the other terms required by the relation. One no longer has to appeal, therefore, to presuppositions external to the relation itself in order to expand the latter's formal definition into a schema of reality. To say one thing is already to have entailed everything else in principle; and actually to say something more is only to expand on what has already been said.

In the *Logic*, Hegel achieves this stage with the modal categories, where (as in Leibniz's system), the more possible something is, the more actual it also is; and the more actual, also the more possible.<sup>17</sup> *Necessity* is a possibility so possible that it amounts to actuality, and an actuality so actual that it excludes limits to possibility. It denotes a presence, in other words, that is just as ineluctable as anything contingent. *Absolute necessity* thus reintroduces *contingency* or facticity, but this time not because it lacks a determinate context of reference – as was the case with the seeming of being – but because it generates one internally. Absolute necessity therefore shifts into *freedom*.<sup>18</sup>

This last point requires stressing. At the dialectical stage of *absolute relation*, the logical object regains in Hegel's *Logic* the same fluidity of determination that appearing being originally displayed. But this fluidity, rather than being due to a lack of firm internal limits as was the case then, is now due instead to the richly articulated network of categories that constitute

the new logical object. To say one thing is tantamount to having said, in principle, everything else. More about this in a moment. The implications of having said in principle everything else need expanding.<sup>19</sup> The important point right now is that Hegel makes his move from Objective to Subjective Logic (i.e. from the logic of being and *essence* to the logic of the *concept*, or again in more historical terms, from classical metaphysics to the standpoint of Idealism) precisely as the upshot of this analysis of the modal categories in general, and of absolute relation in particular. It is also at this stage that Hegel both refers and defers to Spinoza (albeit unofficially, as appropriate to a treatise on Logic). Around 1810, however, Fichte also was making his move from *science of being* to *science of the concept*. He was making it in his lectures on the *Wissenschaftstheorie*. And he too was invoking the name of Spinoza – right at the beginning of the lectures. In what followed, he was to develop analyses of categorial determinations that often call to mind Hegel's parallel analyses in Book II of the Logic. The line of influence, if any, had to be from Fichte to Hegel, of course. The latter must have learned a lot from the early versions of the *Wissenschaftstheorie*. Be that as it may, it is nonetheless in the radically different attitudes that the two assumed with respect to Spinoza's system – in effect, to classical metaphysics – that they parted company.

### The *Wissenschaftstheorie* of 1810

Here, I must enter a brief excursus on Fichte's 1810 lectures. Fichte opens with an analysis of the concept of appearance. Behind the analysis, however, there stands quite explicitly Spinoza, whose definition of God Fichte begins by accepting unqualifiedly. God, or the Absolute, is Being in itself and *by itself* (*von sich*).<sup>20</sup> Now, it follows from this definition, as Fichte argues, that whatever appearance might be the 'appearance of,' it cannot be the appearance of this Being.<sup>21</sup> For if the Absolute truly appeared, then, as Absolute, it would be doubling itself in its appearance – and this is impossible. Or again, if the Absolute truly appeared, then appearance would, itself, have a claim to being and would therefore share in a dominion, which by definition, is already exhausted by the Absolute. In either case, God would cease to *be simply by itself* but would instead *have* being; that is, being would accrue to it also as attribute or mode, only in some respect or other, and the condition set by the original definition of the Absolute would thereby be transgressed. Spinoza was guilty of precisely this transgression. This is the first of two objections that Fichte raises against his mentor.<sup>22</sup> Spinoza had misstated the relation between the Absolute and the realm of determinate being. The Absolute must be said to transcend determinate being absolutely. Therefore, what appears in appearance must be, not the *attribute* or the *mode* of God, but just the appearing of appearance – that is, appearance's being whatever it is only with reference to something else; in effect,

its being 'only appearance,' (i.e. a seeming).<sup>23</sup> On this position alone, according to Fichte, can one avoid the paradox of presupposing the Absolute, yet at the same time reserving ontological space for some other presumably derived, yet still true being. Appearance is *non-being* essentially.<sup>24</sup> This is not to say that it does not carry a significant relation to God or the Absolute. The point is rather that the latter must remain hidden in it (*verborgen*).<sup>25</sup> It is, if I may gloss, as if appearances carried a secret that urgently needs revealing but remains veiled precisely in being announced. In appearing, objects at the same time hide their true being. Appearances are essentially non-revelatory; they offer a visibility (*Ansaulichkeit*) that hides. They are a *nothingness* which is haunted by being. (I suspect that I am playing with a Sartrean image.)

Earlier I said that, in the transition from Objective to Subjective Logic, it is as if Hegel were deliberately opposing Fichte's. At the end of Book II, however, where the logical object is being defined by the modal categories and the Logic still assumes, therefore, the standpoint of classical metaphysics, Hegel's metaphors actually seem to reflect Fichte's. Also, his main objection to Spinoza is essentially the same as Fichte's. Hegel faults Spinoza because in the procession from substance to attribute and mode there is no return in his system from mode back to the originating substance.<sup>26</sup> In other words, just like Fichte, Hegel objects to Spinoza for having left unclarified, and even having falsified, the presence of the Absolute in appearances. Fichte's point is that this presence is to be defined in phenomenal terms (i.e. negatively, or in terms of a significant but essentially unspecified lack). Hegel agrees. The distinctions that the modal categories define are meaningful, indeed, in limited contexts. They even define the sense of these contexts and provide the template for extending meaningful discourse ad infinitum.<sup>27</sup> Yet, as long as in the spirit of classical metaphysics one still assumes the priority of being and essence over *thought*, the discourse that the modal categories make possible is always haunted by the unspoken recognition that, in saying anything, one has already entailed everything else. For in the 'actuality of substance,' a Spinozistic term that Hegel appropriates,<sup>28</sup> everything already is. This actuality is the point of all discourse. It is its intended truth. But this truth is however always missed, and must be recognized only in being missed, for, if ever attained, the whole discourse would disappear into nothingness. Kant himself had implied this much when he alluded to the dissatisfaction of metaphysics.<sup>29</sup> In a similar vein, Fichte now speaks of the 'hiddenness' of the Absolute.<sup>30</sup> Hegel echoes this image. By the end of Book II of the Logic, as his dialectic winds itself up to the pinnacle of classical metaphysics, he says that the 'Absolute [i.e. the Spinozistic type of Absolute] shies away from the light of day.' [Es ist das *Lichtscheue*.]<sup>31</sup> *Verborgenheit* (hiddenness) is Fichte's leading image for the presence of the Absolute in appearances. Hegel's image is equivalent to it.

## Transcending Spinoza

But how does one transcend this standpoint of classical metaphysics? How does one refute Spinoza? For this, I must stay just a bit longer with Fichte's 1810 lectures.

In these lectures, *life* is Fichte's leading image for the just mentioned *actuality* of Spinoza's substance.<sup>32</sup> Fichte also says of *appearances* that they constitute the *schema* of the Absolute. Appearances are God's '*schema primum*.'<sup>33</sup> I shall come in a moment to the link between these two images, life and schema. But first, why this choice of term? Why a schema? The first most obvious answer is that a schema, just as an appearance in general as defined by Fichte, is nothing at all in itself except as the deputy (*Vertreter*) of something else, in this case the Absolute. Yet, while existing only by way of referring to a transcendent *beyond*, all that it says about this beyond is said in terms and according to a logic typically its own. A schema must abide by its internal rules of schematization. In ordinary cases, of course, the coordination of schema and *schematized* is done by a subject external to both. In Fichte's extraordinary case, it has to be done from within the schema itself, since there is no *tertium quid* to Absolute and schema. In effect, this means demonstrating how the hiding of the Absolute in appearance works itself out in terms of the structure of appearance itself. In appearing, appearance demonstrates its own nothingness.

The image of life becomes important for Fichte for this reason. It denotes a force in general capable of assuming a number of different forms while not identifying necessarily with any. Life, of course, can also be given the precision of a scientific concept. Fichte capitalizes, however, on the rich imagery that the concept conveys in ordinary use in order to flesh out the meaning of appearance – or, more accurately, in order to give himself a broader term of reference in virtue of which he might define the relation of appearance to the Absolute in more tangible terms, without stepping outside the realm of appearance itself. Life imitates the Absolute because, like the actuality of the latter, it is a force that contains all possible determinations of being while at the same time transcending them all; that is, it contains them by reducing them to a nothingness, a mere seeming. These determinations do not, however, acquire the form of appearance proper unless the Absolute – or Life, to speak of the Absolute now in more pictorial terms – is in some sense truly manifested in them. And, for this to happen, they cannot simply evanesce, each in some other equally evanescent determination, but must stand firm, so to speak, by their avowed nothingness. They must become reflective events, in other words, exactly what happens when life becomes conscious. It is as if life acquired a new stable determination in the medium of an event that stands out of life's otherwise relentless fluidity by repeating itself. It stabilizes itself by mirroring itself. In so doing, however, it only shows its own nothingness in the face of an

other whose presence remains necessarily hidden.<sup>34</sup> In this way, *but only in this way*, that the other, namely, *life in general* or the *Absolute*, can be said to *appear*. Inasmuch as this reflective event sets itself apart from other would-be determinations of life, it creates the hiatus that separates consciousness from any presumed natural antecedent. It gives rise to an autonomous universe of intentional existence which, because its emergence ultimately escapes explanation, can also be taken as an image of God's freedom.<sup>35</sup>

This is another reason why Fichte substitutes Spinoza's language of attribute and mode with that of schema and schematism. A schema is a product of the mind, an intentional rather than an ontological category as attribute and mode are. And the *Wissenschaftstheorie* is, of course, essentially a science of *science* rather than of being. Inasmuch as Spinoza had abided by ontological categories in determining the appearances of the Absolute, he had failed to give himself the extra conceptual space that he needed in order to retain the distinction between Absolute and appearances, without thereby infringing on the absoluteness of the Absolute. This extra space is for Fichte now the nothingness of subjectivity. In thus modifying Spinoza's language, Fichte is still harking back to his first objection against his mentor. Spinoza's system had not safeguarded the transcendence of the Absolute. But there is a second, even more telling objection, that Fichte raises.<sup>36</sup> Reflection is indeed necessary in order to bring some stability to the flux of life. The nothingness that it holds firm translates itself into the distinctions between subject and object, and between object and object, that make consciousness possible. Nonetheless, the fact remains that in thus schematizing life, reflection also falsifies it. For transcendence is the truth of life, and evanescence – mere seeming – the truth of appearances. The universe of intentional existence that constitutes consciousness does not therefore just hide the Absolute. It also falsifies it. Consciousness represents a fall from Divine Life. Fichte makes this point repeatedly by introducing yet more metaphors. As he says, reflective conceptualization and the schemata that it produces are in fact the death of life; they are, as Fichte puts it, its '*Estorbenheit*.'<sup>37</sup> Or again, they are 'a pause of inner life.' [*Absatz des innern Lebens*].<sup>38</sup> The second objection that Fichte raises against Spinoza is that he mistook the schema of the Absolute that his system elaborates for the life of the Absolute itself.

The purpose of the *Wissenschaftstheorie* is to quicken again the otherwise sclerotized schemata of the world of common experience by bringing them to explicit consciousness through a schema of its own. Fichte's science is a schema of schema-making; an 'appearance of appearance' (*eine Erscheinung der Erscheinung*).<sup>39</sup> In this way, Fichte transcends Spinoza – or at least he thinks that he has transcended Spinoza – namely, by adding a subjective dimension to Spinoza's system, and thereby providing an elaborate language for the nothingness of appearances that Spinoza otherwise famously only asserts with the maxim, *omni determinatio negatio*.



## Hegel versus Fichte

When Fichte's project is stated in these terms, the difference between his 1810 *Wissenschaftstlehre* and Hegel's Logic (i.e. between the two philosophers' respective way of transcending Spinoza) becomes obvious. Hegel's move from Objective to Subjective Logic, from the modal categories to the concept, is so simple that I needed this grand *tour de force* across Fichte to spotlight its extreme character despite its simplicity. The simple point is that the truth of the dialectic of the modal categories is the concept. The fluidity that these categories display, and which gives rise again to the appearing and disappearing of seeming – but now only as a surface event, so to speak, due to a superabundance of determination rather than to a lack of it – is realized in truth only in the life of the concept. Far from being the *death* of life, the concept is its fulfillment. It is in discourse that, in saying one thing, one has already entailed everything else;<sup>40</sup> not in a material sense, as would have to be the case if one stayed by the modal categories as just modalities of being, but in the sense that in discourse, in broaching one theme, one is actually picking up on a wider theme that has been going on forever. And one is thereby also opening up the space for yet another particular theme. The modal relations of being are transcended in order to give place to the purely logical relations of *universal*, *particular*, and *individual*.<sup>41</sup>

There is nothing that remains constitutionally hidden in discourse; nothing, therefore, *immediate* or brutally *factual* in presupposing its universal theme. For the point of all discourse is discourse itself; its underlying theme is precisely the meaning that it constitutes. In other words, discourse is revelatory in the sense that it is what it does (i.e. its actuality is the meaning that it displays while constituting it). It is revelatory also in the sense that in constituting the outlines of an ideal universe, it provides the medium within which the categories of being can be deployed systematically, yet without running into the contradictions that Kant had indicated. They are deployed in particular contexts, on the basis of irreducibly immediate presuppositions. Yet the immediacy that thus affects their use is contained, and thereby superceded, precisely by the discourse that holds the contexts in which they are being used together – a discourse, the whole point of which, as I have been saying, is its self-display. In this, Hegel's Logic radically differs from Fichte's Science. Both Fichte and Hegel supersede Spinoza by demonstrating that his exposition of the Absolute is, in fact, the exposition of the language about the Absolute. Both add a subjective dimension to Spinoza's system. But the assumption still motivating Fichte's Science is that, if ever wrested from its hiddenness, the Absolute would appear as Substance and, in this guise, would put discourse to an end. Fichte still holds on to the supremacy of Being over the Concept. In this respect, his Science is still a chapter of classical metaphysics. For Hegel,



on the contrary, it is clear now that the Absolute *is* the Logical Idea. Hegel's Logic has reversed the traditional order of Being and Concept. In this, it has severed its ties from its metaphysical past.

I am saying, in other words, that for Hegel the essence of things is their concept. Unless we admit this much, and thus take seriously that, for Hegel, Being finally displays its Essence only in the Concept, we introduce in his Logic an element of opacity (*eine Verborgenheit*) that would still commit it, as Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* is committed, to the standpoint of limited consciousness. It would still be a phenomenology instead of the science of pure thought that it claims to be – a discourse about a still transcendent truth rather than a discourse about itself. This difference between Fichte's Science and Hegel's Logic gets cashed out most conspicuously in their respective social theories – a point that I cannot develop here. I can however highlight it with one more brief comment that will bring me back to allusions made at the beginning. Fichte's 1810 lectures conclude with an account of the 'life of God within' that the moral individual should nurture.<sup>42</sup> According to this account, the imitation of God's life sets up within the individual a teleology of action.<sup>43</sup> Now, it might seem paradoxical that a series of lectures that begin under the aegis of Spinoza – a philosopher who famously attributed to ignorance any talk about ends – should end with a theory of morally-inspired intentional activity. Yet, any hint of paradox disappears the moment we remember that appearances are for Fichte a mere seeming of being, and that they acquire stability in consciousness only inasmuch that one stands by their nothingness. The issue in Fichte's moral system is not whether there is, in fact, a teleology of being, but whether one should commit oneself to there being such a teleology, and to act accordingly, whether or not there is one in fact – perhaps even more deliberately so if it were ever established that there is none. Since the relation of appearances to their preconscious antecedent remains in Fichte's system necessarily unclarified, it is ultimately arbitrary whether, within the economy of the appearances themselves, one interprets this antecedent as fated matter or (as Fichte in fact does) as free spirit. In either case, the intended truth remains hidden. Fichte's Science can fit just as well in a Marxist as in an existentialist/religious ethos. For Hegel, on the contrary, there is no ambiguity regarding thought's preconscious antecedent. This antecedent is nature – the *nature* which in the teleology of thought attains its own completion, but in a radically transcendent medium in virtue of which it is also revealed for just what it is, namely, the *this* or *that* that it happens to be. Nature is just *there*, for Spirit to observe and invest with value according to its inner purposes. In this respect, Hegel's Logic preserves, in a more complex sense, the positivity of classical metaphysics. And this, in conclusion, is the positive note – only a note indeed – that I promised at the beginning.

## Notes

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1. Some of the points made in this chapter regarding the 1810 Fichte were originally presented in George di Giovanni, *Sacramentalizing the World: On Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre of 1810*, Address at the München Congress of the *Internationale Johann-Gottlob-Fichte-Gesellschaft* (14–18 Oct. 2003).
  2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Subjektiven Logik Oder die Lehre vom Begriff*, in 12 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* 14–15 (Friedrich Hogemann & Walter Jaeschke eds., 1981) [hereinafter GW]; G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 536–38 (A.V. Miller trans. 1969) [hereinafter SL].
  3. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 581; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 2, ll. 13–18, at 15.
  4. See 12 *GW*, *supra* note 2, ll. 1–3, at 15.
  5. Cf. J.G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings* 15. (Daniel Breazale trans., 1994); I.4 J.G. Fichte, [Erste] Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre, in J.G. Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 430 (Mitwirkung von Ives Radrizzani & Anna Maria Schurr-Lorusso eds., 1998) (hereinafter GA, citing the edition segment in Roman numeral and the volume within the segment in Arabic numeral as per standard practice).
  6. I am referring to the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1810, and *Die Tatsachen des Bewußtseyns* of 1810–1811 (*The Facts of Consciousness*). The texts are found in II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, at 287, and in II.12 GA, *supra* note 5, at 9, respectively.
  7. Cf. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, at 303–5.
  8. Rüdiger Bubner, *The Innovations of Idealism* 71 (Nicholas Walker trans., 2003).
  9. So far as Fichte is concerned, an early statement of this thesis, but still the clearest, is to be found in the Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1797. As for Hegel, the Logic develops the concept of the concept and, only to this extent, it is also the concept of being. I.4 GA, *supra* note 5, at 499; Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings, *supra* note 5, at 84–5.
  10. See II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 18–25, at 306:  
*Appearance* is, in a special sense, *absolutely* for itself, namely as appearance and inasmuch as appearance can be absolute. ... Its being = *only* appearance, not the essence itself; *is* only insofar and because the essence *appears* in it. Therefore *is proper* being is only in *opposition*, and with reference to the absolute being. It is itself only this opposition, and this reference...  
 (as translated by author. These are Fichte's lecture notes, often jotted down in incomplete sentences.)
  11. Hegel states that:  
 Semblance [*Schein*] is ... immediate non-beingness in the determinateness of being, in such a way that it has beingness only by way of reference to an other, only in its non-beingness; it is a non-self-subsistent that has being only in its negation. Only the pure determinateness of *immediacy* is left to it; it is as *reflected* immediacy...  
 See 11 GW, *supra* note 2, ll. 17–21, at 246; see SL, *supra* note 2, at 395–6 (as translated by author). Of course, for Hegel this *semblance* is a surface effect, so to speak, of the reflection of essence.
  12. The whole point of the Logic of Essence is to show that the would-be immediacy of *semblance* is itself a product of reflection. Cf. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 246.

13. This is the opening note of the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1800: 'It is posited: there is an appearance of what is simply there, how would this have to be[?] NB[:] of itself, through itself, from itself.' See II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, l. 4, at 293 (as translated by author). And this is the task of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as stated in the *Tatsachen des Bewußtseins*: 'The task is to analyse in its constituent parts the fact, well known to us all, of this perception in general ... I claim that the following is to be found in consciousness: 1) An affection of the outer sense ...' See II.12 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 29–32, at 321 (as translated by author). The other facts are introduced systematically until a full picture of the life of the mind is developed.
14. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 384–5; SL, *supra* note 2, at 545–6 (making this point in his treatment of the modal categories).
15. See 11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 19–20, at 309. Note that in this particular text, Fichte is referring to the *facticity* of the forms of consciousness that he must assume at each stage of his scientific reflection, but that facticity is not explained in full until the facticity of sense experience, and of intuition in general, is explained.
16. This move is repeatedly made throughout Book II of the Logic. But see, e.g., 11 GW, *supra* note 2, ll. 1–9 at 304, ll. 13–28, at 307; SL, *supra* note 2, at 457–8, 461–2.
17. Cf. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, ll. 19–28, at 383, ll. 9–20, at 388; SL, *supra* note 2, at 544, 549.
18. Cf. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 391–2; SL, *supra* note 2, at 552–3.
19. See Section IV below, and note 40.
20. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, at 293–4 (commenting on *Wissenschaftslehre* – 1810).
21. See the immediately preceding note.
22. According to Fichte, Spinoza's conception amounts to atheism. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 3–4, at 294.
23. See II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 18–25, at 306:

*Appearance* is, in a special sense, *absolutely* for itself, namely as appearance and inasmuch as appearance can be absolute.... Its being = *only* appearance, not the essence itself; *is* only insofar and because the essence *appears* in it. Therefore *is proper* being is only in *opposition*, and with reference to the absolute being. It is itself only this opposition, and this reference....

(as translated by author. See also note 10).

24. Being is to be attributed 'to no other [God excepted], neither immediately nor *mediately*. ... This is the opposite of dogmatism. This [is also] in the first place its [i.e. the *Wissenschaftslehre*'s] *idealism*.' See II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 21–4, at 295 (as translated by author).
25. Fichte says that God is 'hidden' in himself. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 1810–11, at 294 (as translated by author). The supra-sensible world also remains 'hidden.' II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 14–15, at 350 (as translated by author).
26. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 377–8; SL, *supra* note 2, at 539.
27. This template is provided by the dialectic of *real* actuality, *real* possibility, and *real* necessity. Cf. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, l. 10, at 386 to l. 22, at 387; SL, *supra* note 2, at 547–8.
28. SL, *supra* note 2, at 558; see 11 GW, *supra* note 2, l. 10, at 397.
29. Cf.: 'Human reason has the peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions [vi., metaphysics] that it is burdened with questions that it cannot answer, since they

- are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason.' Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Avii (Paul Guyer & Allan Wood tr. 1998).
30. See note 25.
  31. 11 GW, *supra* note 2, l. 1, at 392 (as translated by author); SL, *supra* note 2, at 553. Hegel plays on the image of *blindness* throughout this concluding section of the dialectic of the modal categories.
  32. See note 29.
  33. II. GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 6–7, at 308.
  34. This is how I can make sense of *Wissenschaftslehre – 1810*. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 3–29, at 364.
  35. Cf. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 10–15, 20–30, at 312.
  36. Cf. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 1–5, at 323.
  37. This theme is repeated throughout the *Wissenschaftslehre – 1810*. But see, e.g., II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, l. 5, at 308, ll. 21–5, at 309.
  38. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 5–6, at 308.
  39. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, ll. 13–25, at 299.
  40. See *supra*, note 19.
  41. Cf. 12 GW, *supra* note 2, l. 1, at 35 to l. 14, at 36; SL, *supra* note 2, at 582, 603–4. Further, the genesis of the concept is the 'unveiling of substance.' SL, *supra* note 2, at 581; see 12 GW, *supra* note 2, l. 22, at 15.
  42. Cf. II.11 GA, *supra* note 5, at 320–1 (*in toto*), ll. 15–23, at 341, l. 8, at 349.
  43. This point is developed most clearly in *Tatsachen*. II.12 GA, *supra* note 5, chapter 3 of part III.

# 4

## The One and the Concept: On Hegel's Reading of Plato's *Parmenides*

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### Introduction

Hegel's interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* during the early Jena period focuses largely on its methodological value as a radical exercise in negative skepticism, and, as such, as introduction to proper philosophizing. In his *Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy*, for example, Hegel characterizes Plato's dialogue as exhibiting 'the negative side of the knowledge of the absolute' (*die negative Seite der Erkenntnis des Absoluten*).<sup>1</sup> According to this interpretation, the dialogue's role in the history of philosophy is twofold. On the one hand, the negative dialectic of ideas that constitutes its backbone would exhibit the inadequacy of the understanding to provide true cognition. By showing that concepts (here understood as 'determinations of the understanding [*Verstandesbestimmungen*]' ) like similar and dissimilar, older and younger, continuous and discrete, or, more crucially, same and other, are intimately connected with their respective contradictory, Plato would demonstrate that to deny or attribute these opposites simultaneously to 'finite' or 'badly infinite,' that is, non-self-reflexive,<sup>2</sup> objects of thinking leads to utter unintelligibility. On the other hand, Hegel believes also that the dialogue works as indirect proof of the validity of a different cognitive mode – namely, reason – that Plato intends to display and account for in a separate trilogy: the *Sophistes*, the *Politicós*, and, in definitive form, the *Philosophos*.<sup>3</sup> The *Parmenides* would then tacitly imply that 'truly infinite,' self-reflexive objects of thinking may actually be made intelligible precisely by the dialectic contradictions of which the dialogue shows only the negative results. On this interpretation, the dialogue would indirectly suggest that self-reflexive objects are knowable if they are being thought as dialectical unities of opposites.

In this early interpretation, then, Hegel views Plato's *Parmenides* essentially as negative reflection only paving the way to a positive or speculative science of the absolute. But already in 1807, his well-known remarks on this 'greatest work of art of ancient *dialectic*' in the Preface to the *Phenom-*

*enology* extol the dialogue as containing more than potentially constructive but actually negative skepticism.

In the following development of Hegel's thinking, as attested by his commentaries on this and other Platonic dialogues in the Greater and Lesser Logic<sup>4</sup> and in the lectures on ancient philosophy, the *Parmenides* appears to approximate the status of *prima philosophia speculativa*. Hegel sees now in the dialectic of the ideas exhibited in it an embryonic form of authentic speculative thinking.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he no longer reads Plato's text as cathartic training for a future science but as the historically first insight into the science of the Absolute itself.

Hegel's mature interpretation may at first appear to be untenable on both textual and historical grounds. What I argue in the following tries to dispel some of these doubts.

As a preliminary consideration, it may be stressed that Hegel's reading is at least consistent with his own theory of the history of philosophy. This finds a brief, explicit formulation in the 1820 Introduction to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: 'According to this idea I now maintain that the succession of the systems of philosophy in *history* is the same as the *succession in the logical derivation* of the conceptual determinations of the Idea.'<sup>6</sup> Since the logical series of the determinations of the Idea consists of the successive sublation of each in the next, so does also the series of the systematic principles (*Grundbegriffe*) of philosophy in history. But the systematic principle of Plato's philosophy is the *idea*. Its implicitly speculative character consists in its being at once purely intelligible and the most real. The Platonic *idea*, then, is present in sublated form in the subsequent principles of the philosophies of the Middle Ages and of modernity, including their latest embodiment in Hegel's own theory.

But a sympathetic reading of Hegel's mature interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* requires more. The main task is to clarify the nature of the *Parmenides*' main topic. This requires showing that, contrary to traditional readings, it is legitimate to interpret the underlying subject matter of the fictional *Parmenides*' speech in the dialogue as being quite different from the subject matter at the center of the historical *Parmenides*' poem *About Nature*.<sup>7</sup> While the poet's subject matter may be thought of as a non-reflexive, perhaps 'badly infinite' object of the understanding, the philosopher in the dialogue appears to be rather concerned with a self-reflexive, 'genuinely infinite' object of reason.<sup>8</sup> In other words, on this reading the subject matter of *Parmenides*' speech in the dialogue is not the lonely, impenetrable Being of the historical *Parmenides*' poem, but rather the unity of mind or Ego.

Most of the interpretive tradition, however, with the notable exception of Hegel,<sup>9</sup> has taken for granted precisely this identification of the dialogue's topic with the topic of the pre-Socratic poem.

In defense of Hegel's interpretation, I argue in the following: (1) that there is no unequivocal textual basis for identifying the Being of *Parmenides*'

poem with the 'one' of Plato's dialogue; (2) that a comparison of semantic and syntactic features of the poem on the one hand, and of the dialogue on the other, speaks against such identification; and (3) that there are serious philosophic reasons not to go along with the traditional reading.

Taken together, these considerations actually show that the dialogue as a whole acquires intelligibility and depth when it is understood as a first attempt at grasping the internally contradictory nature of what Hegel would call the Concept.

Hegel, of course, does not claim that this dialogue (or any other Platonic dialogue, for that matter) contains a theory of the speculative Concept. But he does explicate the discussion of contradictions that forms its cornerstone as the earliest insight into the nature of the Concept – though still in the epistemic or psychological embodiment typical of the 'childhood of philosophizing'.<sup>10</sup>

On the Hegelian reading, the dialogue does not exhibit 'external dialectic,' that is, a sophistic exercise in futility. Plato's *Parmenides* actually loses its infamous obscurity – often attributed in twentieth century literature to its allegedly parodic character<sup>11</sup> – if it is recognized that the contradictions being discussed are not intended as determinacies of abstract pure being but as determinations of a more concrete essence. If the contradictions are understood as pertaining to a subject matter (potentially, to a subject) much different from Being (the 'to be' [*einai*] of the pre-Socratic poem) their discussion sheds its appearance of a virtuoso display of pointless dialectic. The dialogue then acquires the dimension of authentic pursuit of truth through dialectic reason, because its author recognizes the subject matter to be potentially an identity of identity and difference – a recognition that Plato abandons in the end, leading even this dialogue to the customary aporetic conclusion.

After sketching briefly the trajectory of my argument, I analyze a passage of the *Parmenides* that is essential to my thesis. This is the pivotal passage in which Plato introduces, through Parmenides' voice, the subject matter of the dialectical investigation to follow.

At the beginning of his main speech,<sup>12</sup> the old Parmenides singles out the notion of *emautos* (myself) as the field of inquiry in which to challenge the dialectical skill of his younger audience. From a Hegelian perspective, 'myself' can be taken here as psychological instantiation of Plato's philosophic concept of *idea* as that to which belongs the highest degree of reality. To frame this in terms of Hegel's Logic, one could say that Plato's *emautos* embodies in antiquity, at the logical level of being, the notion of what would later find expression, at the logical level of essence, in Descartes' *res cogitans* or in Spinoza's *causa sui*. The immediate certainty of the Cartesian substance – 'I exist' – is due precisely to the fact that, in and for this substance, thought and existence coincide. Spinoza's substance is such as to be inconceivable unless existent.<sup>13</sup> If, in conformity with Hegel's theory of the history of philosophy, his own concept of the Concept is a sublation of

logical and historical predecessors, then the Concept will contain also a version of Plato's original conception of *idea*. Thus, the fact that the core of a Platonic dialogue consists of the denial and attribution of contradictory pairs of ideas to one and the same subject matter loses, at least for a Hegelian reader, its outrageous character, provided this subject matter can be interpreted as an object of reason.

### Analysis: with what must Plato's dialectic begin?

In the first part of the *Parmenides*,<sup>14</sup> Plato examines the relations between the ideas (*ideai*), forms (*eide*) or kinds (*gene*), on the one hand, and the sensible things ('the visibles') that participate in the ideas, on the other. In the second part,<sup>15</sup> Plato investigates, through the character of the old Parmenides, the relations among the ideas themselves.

In the opening,<sup>16</sup> young Socrates boldly declares that the notion of a sensible thing's participation (*methexis*) in different, even contradictory ideas, for instance similarity and dissimilarity, is logically unproblematic: after all, each sensible thing can be like others in some respect and yet unlike them in some other respect. It is equally intelligible, almost a matter of course, that all sensible things (*panta*) may be one entity from one perspective (one world) but many from another: every thing and all things can rationally be said to 'partake of one-ness' as much as 'of multitude.'<sup>17</sup> Thus, the attribution of opposite predications to finite entities does not strike Socrates as irrational as long as the predications are meant to hold in different respects. The apparent contradictoriness of things can be resolved by appeal to perspectivism: I, says Socrates, am many because I am composed of parts, but I am also one because I am a unity, one man.<sup>18</sup>

Real problems arise, in the young man's view, only when one considers the (logical) relations of ideas among themselves. What is the relation of the 'form, itself by itself'<sup>19</sup> of equality to that of inequality, of motion to rest, of coming to be to passing away or, most crucially, of being itself to non-being?<sup>20</sup> The precocious metaphysician finds it absurd to claim that oneness itself is or even partakes of multiplicity itself and vice versa. The ideas escape perspectivism. Since they cannot suffer to have predicates different from themselves, they have no parts and thus do not admit of either aspects or points of view. Each idea, if properly understood, is fully and exclusively what it is. If it is to be known, then it can be known only simply or immediately as what it is. The reason that no predicate – let alone opposite pairs of predicates – can attach to ideas lies in a discursive understanding of predication that would become canonized by Aristotle: the predicates of any given individual denote the species to which the individual belongs (or in which it participates), each species being defined in turn by its own participation in a higher species and so forth. But the ideas, being the highest kinds in which everything participates, cannot in their



turn participate in any higher kind. The ultimate *gene* cannot be defined by reference to genus and specific difference, that is, they cannot be known discursively. The way to a grasp of the ideas, so it seems to Socrates, is neither dialogical nor dialectical. They must, in some way, be known 'themselves by themselves.'<sup>21</sup>

Socrates, however, faced with Parmenides' relentless criticism of the ideas, of their cognizability and of the participation of things in them,<sup>22</sup> does admit to difficulties inherent in the notion of participation and to obscurities pertaining to the very notion of idea. Despite this, however, he still insists (rather timidly, given the age and authority of his interlocutor) that what is logically impossible for sensible things and their classes may not be unthinkable regarding things that 'occur only in minds [*en psychais*]'': 'But, Parmenides, maybe each of these forms is a thought ... and properly occurs only in minds. In this way each of them might be one and no longer face the difficulties mentioned just now[,]'<sup>23</sup> these difficulties being mainly the paradoxes produced by the sensibles' participation in the ideas.

In the following intricate lesson in dialectics (the dialogue's second part) Parmenides accepts as a matter of fact Socrates' distinction between determinations proper to sensible things and those proper to ideas. At the same time, however, he undermines Socrates' epistemological optimism regarding the intelligibility of the latter. For the character Parmenides, while apparent contradictions affecting sensible things may indeed be resolved by perspectivism, the contradictions that seem to beset merely thinkable things offer insurmountable difficulties and even evoke the specter of a far too radical idealism: 'Given your claim ... , won't you necessarily think either that each thing is composed of thoughts and all things think, or that, although they are thoughts, they are not being thought?'<sup>24</sup> The outcome of Parmenides' unrelenting exposure of the inherent contradictions of the ideas, those 'things graspable only by means of reason'<sup>25</sup> is their hopeless unintelligibility.

Prodded by his audience, Parmenides launches in a dialectical analysis that commences with a rhetorical question about his listeners' willingness to begin their thinking with what is most fundamental: 'Do you wish me, since we seem to want to play this difficult game, to begin with myself and the hypothesis of myself, taking as our foundation with regards to the one itself either that one is or not one, and see what follows from there?'<sup>26</sup>

In this pivotal passage, Parmenides uses three different expressions to identify the beginning: 'myself (*emautos*)', 'the hypothesis (*hypothesis*) of myself,' and 'the one itself (*to hen autos*).' Parmenides goes on raising the disconcerting prospect that two equally reasonable but contradictory claims may be made about this original subject, namely (i) that it may only be one, and (ii) that it may also be not-one, or many. From these two claims follow, in a sort of logical parthenogenesis, four further pairs of mutually contradictory theses.<sup>27</sup> If, according to (i), the beginning, as foun-

dation (*arche*) of all there is, is only one, then the one can be shown to be nothing (thesis 1), as well as everything (thesis 2). But, again, if the principle is only one, it follows also that the many are nothing (thesis 3), as well as everything (thesis 4). Vice versa if, as assumed by (ii), not-one is the foundation, then it follows, with regards to the one, that it both is everything (thesis 5) and nothing (thesis 6); while again under the same assumption it also follows, with regards to the many, that they are everything (thesis 7) and nothing (thesis 8).

Each of these eight claims is then applied to the fundamental determinations of what there is, that is, to the ideas in which all things must participate. What results from this operation is the unsettling realization that the subject matter at issue (however vaguely defined at the start) can neither be said to be continuous nor discrete;<sup>28</sup> neither finite nor infinite;<sup>29</sup> neither contained in itself nor in another;<sup>30</sup> neither moving nor at rest, neither changing nor unchanging;<sup>31</sup> neither identical with itself or with another, nor different from itself or from another;<sup>32</sup> neither equal nor unequal to itself and to others;<sup>33</sup> neither spatially nor temporally determined;<sup>34</sup> and so forth. There is no escaping the intrinsic negativity and contradictoriness of the matter at hand. The outcome of the dialogue, as we have come to expect, is aporetic. In the last lines, Parmenides' contradictory conclusion finds the unreserved (if perhaps nonsensical) approval of his interlocutor:

'[W]hether one is or is not, it and the others, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other are and are not, and both appear and do not appear, all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other.'

'Very true.'<sup>35</sup>

Much of the sense of the dialectic played out here actually depends on how one interprets Plato's first presentation (via Parmenides' voice) of the subject matter to be investigated. This must be stressed especially in view of the controversies in the literature spanning decades about the precise target of the dialogue's criticism: Is the dialogue pro-Eleatic or anti-Eleatic? Is the first part against Platonic idealism, the second against Parmenidean monism, both, or neither? Does its dialectics embody a logical exercise or an ontological doctrine? Is it 'serious' logic, fundamental ontology, or a parody of Parmenides' poem – a kind of literary criticism *avant la lettre*? The actual formulation of Plato's announcement of the subject matter of the inquiry has received surprisingly little attention in the vast and detailed literature on this work.<sup>36</sup> For the purposes of my analysis it is worth quoting the passage again in as literal a translation as possible, with the decisive Greek phrases given in brackets. This is how the character Parmenides formulates his rhetorical question:

'Do you wish me, since we seem to want to play this difficult game, to begin with myself [*ap' emautou arxomai*] and the hypothesis of myself [*kai tes emautou hypotheses*], taking as our foundation [*hypothemenos*] with regards to the one itself [*peri tou henos autou*] either that one is or not one [*eite hen estin eite me hen*], and see what follows from there?'<sup>37</sup>

Given the semantic and syntactic ambiguities of this passage, one cannot simply go along with commentaries and translations that de facto neglect the double emphasis on 'myself' in the main clause while crudely disambiguating the phrase 'the hypothesis of myself' by simply rendering it 'my own hypothesis'.<sup>38</sup> Neither is there a clear reason why we should follow the seemingly unremarkable rendering of the Greek *hypothesis* with the English 'hypothesis' (whose subjective connotation Cornford radicalizes as 'supposition'<sup>39</sup>) or with the French *hypothèse*, both indicating a theoretical assumption. A review of the principal modern translations of this passage indicates that most (with two exceptions)<sup>40</sup> are equivalent renditions of Marsilio Ficino's fifteenth century Latin text. One of the earliest editions of Ficino's translation renders the phrase 'to begin with myself and the hypothesis of myself' with *a me ipso meaque suppositione in primis exordiar*.<sup>41</sup> In the edition possessed by Hegel (the so-called Bipontina edition of 1787) the prefix of *suppositione* has been dropped and the text reads *meaque positione*,<sup>42</sup> thus better rendered with 'my positing' (the German *setzen*) than 'my presupposing' (*voraussetzen*).

Friedrich Schleiermacher's 1817 translation<sup>43</sup> (one that Hegel does not appear to have used) starts out by following Ficino quite literally: 'Or do you wish me ... to start from myself and my presupposition ... ? (*Oder wollt ihr ..., dass ich von mir selbst anfangen und von meiner Voraussetzung ... ?*)' – a formulation echoed in countless variations ever since. But Schleiermacher then strays from Ficino's text. Instead of using *voraussetzen* (that could be misconstrued as meaning 'to suppose') in order to render *hypothemenos*, he uses *zugrunde legen* ('to take as our foundation' or, literally, 'to place under'): 'by taking the one itself as ground (*indem ich das Eins selbst zugrunde lege*).' Auguste Diès' very influential 1923 French text is an exact rendition of Ficino: 'myself' is translated with *moi-même*, 'the hypothesis of myself' with *ma propre hypothèse*, and 'taking as our foundation' becomes *posant*.<sup>44</sup>

According to these classical readings, then, Parmenides appears to be announcing not one but two beginnings: himself and a theoretical hypothesis with which his name is widely associated. The significance of the first instance of 'myself' is largely ignored in the literature that seems to view it as purely rhetorical and logically superfluous. The second instance of 'myself' is taken as the grammatical equivalent of a possessive adjective: 'my (hypothesis)'. Thus, the dialectical analysis being introduced by this passage is taken to apply to the Being of the Parmenidean poem, which in its turn is understood as a working assumption.

I discuss five problems with this interpretation of the Greek text. The least of these is stylistic in nature, but still worth mentioning. It ought to strike us as uncharacteristic of Plato's elegant prose to first introduce the subject matter of an argument as if it coincided with the author of the argument ('let's begin with myself'), to then correct it as being an assumption made by the author ('my hypothesis'), and finally to formulate the proper philosophic thesis at stake (whether 'one is or not one').

The second difficulty is grammatical – 'my hypothesis' is a better rendition of the Greek expression *he eme hypothesis* than of the more complex one actually used by Plato: *he emautou hypothesis*. The first uses a straightforward possessive adjective; the second, a possessive pronoun in the notoriously ambiguous genitive form that may indicate a subjective or an objective relation to its noun – either 'my own hypothesis' or else 'the hypothesis of/about myself.'<sup>45</sup> The only rendition of the objective genitive that I have been able to find is in the Italian translation by Enrico Pegone: '*l'ipotesi di me stesso*' (the hypothesis of myself).<sup>46</sup>

My third concern stems from Plato's alleged characterization of the so-called hypothesis in question as pertaining to 'the one' of Parmenides' poem. As a matter of fact, contrary to what happens in Plato's text,<sup>47</sup> the text of *About Nature* contains no reference at all to an existing one, to a 'one' that is, or to 'the one'. The entire poem contains merely one instance of 'one' (*hen*), used not as a noun, but as an attribute in a cluster of three: 'whole, one, continuous' (*pan, hen, syneches*).<sup>48</sup> These in turn are attributed to what the poet consistently refuses to name while alluding to it circuitously through various tenses of the verb 'to be' (*einai*).<sup>49</sup> The poem's references to what we commonly translate as 'being' are verb forms throughout: *einai* (to be), *estin* (is) and *eon* (being as the participial form of to be).<sup>50</sup>

In the Platonic dialogue, indeed, Socrates initially characterizes Parmenides' famous doctrine quite faithfully as simply stating 'that the whole is one,'<sup>51</sup> a declaration in which, again, 'one' is a predicate and 'is' is the copula that relates it to the subject, namely the whole. But a few lines later we are suddenly faced, through Zeno's intervention, with an original rewording ('if the one is') where 'one' has suddenly become a propositional subject and 'is' has acquired an existential function: 'The truth is that the book comes to the defense of Parmenides' argument against those who try to make fun of it by claiming that, if the one is [*ei hen esti*], many absurdities and self-contradictions result from that argument.'<sup>52</sup> This new existential meaning of 'to be' is at work in the passage under our scrutiny that opens the second part of the dialogue; let us take as our foundation, we are told, with regards to the one itself, either that it is or that not-one.

In sum, the historical Parmenides' claim is 'all is one.' However, the characters Parmenides and Zeno argue about the existence of the 'one'. This discrepancy suggests that the dialogue's reference to an unequivocal, well-

known hypothesis of the poet-philosopher to the effect that the one exists is at the very least doubtful.

My fourth criticism of the traditional readings concerns precisely the clause 'either that one is or not one.' Ever since Ficino, this is rendered in the (inherently Hamletic) version 'either the one is or it is not,' in which 'not [*me*]' negates the existence of the 'one' (as if the text read *me estin*) rather than negating, as Plato's text does, simply the one (*me hen*). The Platonic formulation thus implies the possibility that what there is may be the negation of oneness in form of multiplicity – the 'not-one' and thus the many, or also, perhaps, a 'one' that is many. The translations, however, only imply that the Platonic Parmenides' 'one' may or may not exist – either being, or nothing, but not both.

Taken together, these four considerations alone already make it plausible for Hegel to interpret the principal subject matter of the dialogue as an object that escapes the boundaries of the logic of the understanding. The topic, in other words, cannot be the Being of the famous poem but is rather an utterly non-Eleatic conception: 'myself.' This is not only the more plausible denotation of the only instance of 'the one' in our passage ('the one itself') but it is also a more worthy subject for an inquiry into the contradictory predicates of one and the same substratum.

The fifth and final reason for rethinking this Platonic text along Hegelian lines is connected with the meanings of the Greek *hypothesis*. To begin with, if the dialogue were, indeed, referring to a hypothesis, then it could hardly refer to the Parmenidean Being, for a simple reason: *About Nature* is utterly devoid of any hypothetical thinking whatsoever. As has been remarked by others, the poem is, as befits its genre, 'prophetic and apodictic'<sup>53</sup> throughout.

Furthermore, the complex semantics of *hypothesis* in Greek at the very least allows for alternative interpretations. *Hypothesis* is a substantivation of the verb *hypotithemi*, whose original meaning (in Homer, for example) is 'to place under' (Schleiermacher's *zugrunde legen*) and which indeed is used as such in countless pre-classical and classical texts, including Plato's.<sup>54</sup> The economic meaning of *hypotithemi*, namely, to put down (a sum), with its corollary connotation of pledge or wager on future developments<sup>55</sup> may very well have contributed to the secondary metaphorical uses of the verb as 'to propose,' 'to suggest,' 'to assume' and even 'to suppose,' all of which are indeed equally well documented in Plato's works.<sup>56</sup> Thus, only contextual considerations may decide in favor of translating *hypothesis* as 'hypothesis' or, as I propose in this case, 'subject matter' or even 'ground.'

As for Ficino's translation, it must be remarked that the Latin (*sup*)*positio* does not denote primarily a theoretical assumption. Like its corresponding Greek term, (*sup*)*positio* denotes the act of placing underneath, as for example in the planting of seeds or in the laying out of grounds.<sup>57</sup> If Ficino had understood Plato as introducing a theoretical supposition in our sense,

it is probable that he would have translated *hypothesis* with *assumptio*, *opinio* or *coniectura*.

In conclusion, there is no clear reason why Plato's use of *hypothesis* and *hypotithemi* would require us to choose only one pole of the alternative between metaphysical grounding and theoretical hypothesizing. This is more likely a disjunction that forces itself upon the modern reader and is reflected in modern languages' semantic separation of (objective) ground from (subjective) assumption.

## Conclusion

At various junctures in the *Science of Logic*<sup>58</sup> we are reminded that, while the separation of the so-called objective (ontological) from the so-called subjective (epistemic) meaning of 'concept' is a useful analytic distinction of modern philosophizing, it must eventually be overcome in order for the two meanings to be grasped as what they are, namely, connotations or moments of the Concept (or of the concept of the Idea).<sup>59</sup> Thus, for example, in the Doctrine of Essence we speak of essence but also of reflection, we analyze the dialectic of 'essentialities' parallel to that of 'determinations of reflection',<sup>60</sup> and so on. It is precisely by sublating the distinction of subjectivity and objectivity that we are enabled in the end to find their common ground.<sup>61</sup> The same happens again, of course, with the very concept of *ground* – we must first distinguish objectively sufficient conditions from subjectively sufficient reasons before eventually being able to recognize their unity in the 'absolute relation' we call actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). And again, in the kind of actuality we call substance, we have to distinguish passivity from activity, effect from cause, in order to comprehend (once faced with the instability of each of these) that the truth of cause/effect relationality is universal reciprocity, and that the truth of substance is its being a relation (*das Substanzverhältnis*) between moments internal to it. Ultimately, even to call this absolute relation 'substance' or 'substantiality' is a misnomer. What we have here is rather the completion of substance (*die Vollendung der Substanz*), namely, 'the Concept, the subject'.<sup>62</sup>

For Hegel, the distinction between subjective and objective connotations of concepts and, more radically, the separation of logic from metaphysics, are at once historical achievements of modern philosophy and its self-imposed limitations. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of this separation, to assume it tacitly in the interpretation of texts that historically precede the differentiation must necessarily hinder our comprehension of them.

Applied to the *Parmenides*, this means that a grasp of the principle from which arise the dialogue's contradictory deductions<sup>63</sup> will be hampered by the assumption of the following alternative: either this principle is the object of, or it is a presupposition for, the discourse that follows (in other

words, either the *hypothesis* is an objective *hypokeimenon* or it is a subjective conjecture, but not both).<sup>64</sup> If we take Hegel's perspective, it becomes rather plausible that Plato means the dialectical investigation to begin from what is both being and thought: not just a 'one' but a one that thinks the 'one' – not unlike, though on a still more abstract level than, another beginning of philosophy: *cogito, ergo sum*.<sup>65</sup> If Parmenides is made to call this beginning 'myself and the hypothesis of myself,' then we may as well acknowledge this point of origin as the *thinking* of being, the Ego that both deduces and lays down itself as the ground of all deduction. In this sense, and with these qualifications, Plato's *Parmenides* can reasonably be said to display the beginning stage of genuinely speculative philosophy. Hegel maintains that the transition from objective to subjective logic provides a richer, more 'concrete' concept of reality than could be delivered by either the logic of Being or the logic of Essence alone. The logic of the Concept provides a notion that is the unity of the being – and essence – connotations of that which the notion signifies. This object of thought is (exists) only insofar and as long as it is 'reflection into itself' (*Reflexion in ihm selbst*): a self-reflective reality. According to Hegel, self-reflective reality marks in turn 'the highest possible determination' (*die höchste Bestimmung*) to which any reality can attain. Indeed, if reciprocal reflection is the kind of relation by which every reality acquires its essential determinations, then self-reflection is the kind of relation by which a reality acquires its essential determinations from itself alone. Thus, Hegel calls self-reflection not only the highest form of determination but also 'the absolute relation' (*das absolute Verhältnis*). In this kind of logical relation, the poles are such that their roles are indistinguishable. This is neither because they switch role in turns, nor because a beholder external to the relation cannot distinguish them. The absolute relation holds objectively between poles that 'turn into one another' (*ineinander überschlagen*) simultaneously and in the same respect.

In self-reflection or absolute relation, therefore, there actually are no two opposite poles but rather a self-opposing one. This one, far from shunning contradiction, is itself essential contradiction. It is its own object, and thus its own subject; it determines itself, and is thus determined by itself; it posits its own identity, and thus its own difference, exactly as envisioned by Parmenides in the dialogue:

'Nor will it [i.e., the one] be the same as itself.'

'Why not?'

'The nature of the one is not, of course, also that of the same... .

Therefore, if the one is to be the same as itself, it won't be one with itself; and thus it will be one and not one.'<sup>66</sup>

Absolute relation, then, characterizes for Hegel that first, abstract, *an sich* determination of the Concept we call the Ego: 'The Concept ... is none



other than the I or pure self-consciousness. I do have concepts of course, that is, determinate concepts; but I is the pure Concept itself that has come into *determinate being* [zum Dasein] as concept.<sup>67</sup>

In this interpretation, the second part of Plato's *Parmenides* represents an attempt, necessarily unsuccessful, to sketch a logic of the Concept in-itself. The dialectical inquiry must begin from a foundation, a substance of some sort – a one. But not just any substance will do. A beginning in radical philosophizing can only be a beginning without presuppositions. But how can it be made? To any arbitrarily agreed upon beginning, sophists and other philosophers can always find another that precedes it. Appeals to intuition or faith are not an option in Greek philosophy. The only available rational choice is to begin from that which has itself for its presupposition. But the Being of Parmenides' poem, while defined as 'ungenerated, imperishable, undivided'<sup>68</sup> is also described as being held by 'mighty necessity' in inexorable bonds.<sup>69</sup> It is, then, absolutely dependent upon another, rather than being absolute relation itself. It dwells in utterly passive dependence upon necessity (a determination it has not given itself), rather than relating to itself. Indeed, the poem's Being has no self to which it can relate. It does not endure external difference nor does it sustain internal differentiation. Thus, to both deny and affirm of it, as done in the dialogue, that it is one and multiple, similar and dissimilar, old and young, continuous and discrete, would make no sense at all. In this scenario, indeed, Plato's text would be rather uncharacteristic of its author: a paradigm of sophistry, perhaps even a display of intellectual vacuity.

It is prudent, then, to avoid interpreting the character Parmenides as offering as ground of the dialectic deductions the principle (or the hypothesis) of a purely external being, lacking all inward dimension and self-differentiation. It is more reasonable to take the poet-philosopher's announcement more seriously, if not more literally: Parmenides offers the principle of his self, *emautos*. What follows from this is an ineluctable series of contradictions that can be neither determinacies of his being nor determinations of his essence alone, but may well be determinations of the unity of both. Thus, modern philosophers come to understand how the ideas of the dialogue, taken together, may form the web of dialectical relations by which a wholly new substance may be explained: a subject.

Needless to say, Hegel does not anachronistically attribute his theory of subjectivity to Plato. Quite apart from historical considerations having to do with Hegel's judgment of Plato's philosophy as expressing a *Zeitgeist* in which subjectivity is still underdeveloped, Hegel is well aware of Plato's consistent rejection of any thought involving the self-contradiction of a subject matter. No amount of dialectical reasoning, whether *ex negativo* or *ex positivo*, will convince Plato that a 'one' exists that is subject and object of itself, simultaneously and in the same respect. The point of Hegel's mature reading of *Parmenides* is rather that he detects in it an objective logic



leading inescapably, even against Plato's intention and self-understanding, to the recognition of such a self-contradictory 'one.' This is not subject to the same determinations as the visible things are. It is, actually, subject to no one-sided determination whatsoever and precisely because of this it is, for Plato though not for Hegel, both unintelligible and nonexistent. While the *Sophistes* will provide some evidence for an affirmative form of the dialectic of the real (though still to the exclusion of an authentically self-contradictory entity), the *Parmenides* provides merely negative arguments about what cannot belong to the 'one'. In a particularly dramatic passage,<sup>70</sup> the philosopher stresses that the 'one' is impervious to all formal and quantitative determinacies: it is neither another from others nor from itself,<sup>71</sup> neither identical with others nor self-identical.<sup>72</sup> If it were self-identical, Parmenides explains to his astonished audience, the one would actually have to be in some strange sense double, even self-contradictory. In the passage quoted above, Parmenides argues that the one cannot have differing determinations without becoming different from itself – the idea of one-ness and that of sameness are different ideas ('the nature of the one is not ... also that of the same').<sup>73</sup> Thus, if self-same, the one cannot be one, and if one, it cannot be self-same. It follows that 'it will be one and not one. But this surely is impossible.'<sup>74</sup>

This is the most radical consequence that derives from Parmenides' self-destructive analysis. Self-contradiction is and remains in Plato's thinking an inadmissible feature if something is to be intelligible and existent at all.<sup>75</sup>

Such are, according to Hegel, the deeper philosophic reasons why even the *Parmenides* must end in *aporiae*. While envisioning subjectivity, the world of Greek antiquity, and with it, Plato, turned away in the end from 'the realm of *freedom*'<sup>76</sup> that would be disclosed by grasping substance as subjectivity.

## Notes

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1. G.W.F. Hegel, Jaener Kritische Schriften, in 4 *Gesammelte Werke* 207 (Hartmut Buchner & Otto Poeggeler eds, 1968) [hereinafter GW] .
2. The Hegelian equivalence of 'finitude'/'bad infinity' with lack of self-reflexivity, and of 'genuine infinity' with self-reflexivity, that I take for granted here, is concisely explained and criticized by Michael Inwood:

The bad infinite is represented by a straight line . . . the true infinite by a circle.... He applies this idea [of true infinity] to any relatively self-contained reciprocal or circular structure ... e.g. ... the SPIRIT or self-consciousness that is not limited by its other, but at home (*bei sich*) in it; and logic itself, in which thought has itself as its object.

Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* p141 (1992).

3. As explained by Düsing, the *Philosophos* never saw the light of day. Klaus Düsing, *Hegel and die klassische Antike* ch.2 (2001)

4. For the Greater Logic, see 11 GW 311–12 (Doctrine of Essence) ; and 12 *id* 241–4; (Doctrine of the Concept), *Hegel's Science of Logic* 466, 830–32 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter *SL*]. For the Lesser Logic, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic* § 92 Addition, § 95 Remark, § 96 Addition, § 121 Addition, § 142 Addition, § 214 (T. F. Geraets *et al.*, trans., 1991) [hereinafter *EL*].
5. It has been convincingly shown that Hegel's interpretation (even 'projection') is not equivalent to that of the Neoplatonists. See, e.g. Klaus Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie* (1983). It cannot be my task here to clarify the distinction between the Neoplatonic and the Hegelian Plato-interpretation, so I presuppose this difference in what follows.
6. 'Nach dieser Idee behaupte ich nun, dass die Aufeinanderfolge der Systeme der Philosophie in der Geschichte dieselbe ist, als die Aufeinanderfolge in der logischen Ableitung der Begriffsbestimmungen der Idee.' G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungsmanuskripte II*, in GW 18 p. 49.
7. 1 Hermann Diels & Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 227–45 (1966). In the following, citations are given according to the standard system for this work.
8. In Hegel's system, the epistemological correlative of 'object of the understanding' is a 'determination of the understanding,' as used in the positive sciences and in common parlance (*Verstandesbestimmung*, rarely also *Verstandesbegriff*). The correlative of 'object of reason' is a 'concept of reason' (*Vernunftbegriff*). Hegel finds the latter term, though not what it denotes, to be redundant (see 12 GW 173; *SL supra* note 4 at 755) and thus uses it very sparingly. He uses the generic *Vorstellung* for the common conception of concepts, thus reserving *Begriff* without qualification for the domain of reason. Examples of objects of reason (and their respective concepts) are '*freedom, spirit, God*,' *EL* § 8, but also 'world' and 'self-consciousness.'
9. And with the exception of one (as far as I have been able to determine) contemporary translator. See *infra* note 46.
10. 18 GW 48.
11. See, e.g. the very influential study of Harold F. Cherniss, *Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato*, 53 *Am. J. Philology*, 122–38 (1932).
12. That is, at Parmenides 137b. I quote the translation by Mary L. Gill and Paul Ryan in *Plato. Complete Works* (John M. Cooper ed., 1997). I have noted the places in which I have modified this translation after comparison with the Greek text in *Platonis Opera* (John Burnet ed., 1900–07). Citations to the Platonic dialogues are given according to the standard system used in all editions of Plato's work.
13. Baruch de Spinoza, *Ethics* pt. 1, Definition 1 (George H.R. Parkinson ed., 2000) ('By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence, or, that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing.').
14. Parmenides 126a–137b.
15. *Id.* 137b–166c.
16. *Id.* 129b.
17. *Id.*
18. *Id.* 129d.
19. *Id.* 129a.
20. *Id.* 136b.
21. *Id.* 129d–e.
22. See *id.* 131a–e (showing Parmenides' criticism of 'participation' as implying the self-contradictory character of the ideas); see also *id.* 132a–b (famously arguing

that participation requires a mediator between idea and thing, another mediator for the first mediator and so on in a 'badly infinite' regress).

23. *Id.* 132b.
24. *Id.* 132c.
25. *Id.* 135e.
26. *Id.* 137b. Though I follow the gist of Gill-Ryan's translation, I have had to modify this passage for reasons that become apparent in the following.
27. I follow Klaus Düsing's reconstruction of the Parmenides' second part. Düsing, *supra*, note 3, ch.10.
28. Parmenides 137d.
29. *Id.* 137e.
30. *Id.* 138a.
31. *Id.* 138b–139b.
32. *Id.* 139a–e.
33. *Id.* 139e–140d.
34. *Id.* 140b–141d.
35. *Id.* 166c (I have modified Gill-Ryan's translation).
36. My analysis is based on the following selection: Harold Cherniss, *supra* note 13; Paul Friedlaender, *Platon* (1954); Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (1956); Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, *Platon et l'idéalisme allemand* (1770–1830) (1979); Rudolf-Peter Hägler, *Platons 'Parmenides'* (1983); Klaus Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie* (1983); Franz von Kutschera, *Platons 'Parmenides'* (1995); Düsing, *supra* note 3.
37. Parmenides 137b.
38. As does, for example, Benjamin Jowett in *2 Plato: Dialogues* 98 (1953).
39. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides' Way of Truth and Plato's Parmenides* 108 (1939).
40. Friedrich Schleiermacher's and Enrico Regoue's translations are discussed below.
41. Marsilio Ficino, *Platonis Opera Omnia* 24 (1484). Here is the wording of the 1491 edition of Ficino's text: '*Unde igitur incipiemus? quidve primum supponemus? an vultis, postquam negotiosum ludum ingressi sumus, a me ipso meaque suppositione in primis exordiar, de ipso uno supponens, sive unum sit, sive non, quid accidat?*' Despite close resemblance, the correspondence of modern translations to Ficino's Latin is only partial. Among other things, as I argue below, Ficino's (*sup*)positio is not semantically equivalent to 'supposition,' 'assumption,' or 'hypothesis' in their subjective modern acceptance.
42. For an exact reconstruction of the fascinating history of the editions of Ficino's translation see James Hankins, *Some Remarks on the History and Character of Ficino's Translation of Plato*, in *Marsilio Ficino e il Ritorno di Platone* 287–304 (Gian Carlo Garfagnini ed., 1986).
43. Friederich D.E. Schleiermacher, *Platons Werke* (1817–1828).
44. 8 *Platon, Oeuvres complètes* 71 (Auguste Diès trans., 1923).
45. Interestingly, Liddell and Scott's augmented *Greek–English Lexicon* does not provide even one instance of *emautou* as 'my' or 'mine,' but renders it exclusively as 'of me, of myself' (or, impersonally, 'of oneself'), giving Plato, Charmides 155d, as one example: *ouket'en emautou en* ('I no more was master of myself').
46. 2 *Platone, Tutte le opere* 167 (Enrico V. Maltese ed., 1997). My agreement with Pegone's translation does not amount to maintaining that the construction with the personal pronoun ('of myself') is never used in Greek to express the adjectival 'my.' The syntactical and grammatical ambiguities of a text are circumstan-

- tial evidence, not definitive proof, for or against a philosophic interpretation. I am using this example only in concomitance with the other objections listed.
47. See, for example, the formulations *hen esti*, Parmenides 128d and 137b, and *peri tou henos*, 137b. The expression *to hen* recurs too often to be cited.
  48. Diels and Kranz 1, 28 B 8, 2.
  49. For example, the subject of the threefold predication discussed here is merely a relative clause: the 'that it is [*hos estin*]' (*id.* 28 B 8, 6).
  50. Hägler, *supra* note 36, can find only one instance of *eon* accompanied by the determinate article): see Diels and Kranz 1, 28 B 4. There are, however, more: see *id.* 28 B 6, 1 and 28 B 8, 32–7.
  51. Parmenides 128a ('*Hen phes einai to pan.*').
  52. *Id.* 128d. Gill and Ryan translate *ei hen esti* with 'if it is one,' but to justify the addition of the pronoun 'it' they add an explanatory note that makes 'the all' into the subject of the phrase. Cf. Plato, *supra* note 12, 362.
  53. Hägler, *supra* note 36, at 105.
  54. See Plato, *Timaeus* 92a; *Laws* 682c; *Politikos* 289a and 308a.
  55. Even in Plato: see Protagoras 313a.
  56. See e.g. *Timaeus* 26a, 53d; *Laws* 812a; *Phaedo* 101d.
  57. The closest the Latin (*sup*)positio comes to the English '(pre)supposition' is in its plural use for 'circumstances.' The farthest is its juridical denotation of '(fraudulent) substitution' (for example, the *suppositio* of a legitimate with an illegitimate son).
  58. See, e.g. 21 *GW* *supra* note 1, at 53ff.; (Doctrine of Being) *id.* 11, 241 ff.; *SL* *supra* note 4, at 67 ff. and 389 ff.
  59. See *EL* § 236.
  60. 11 *GW* *supra* note 1, at 258; *SL*, *supra* note 4, at 408.
  61. 11 *GW* *supra* note 1, at 291; *SL*, *supra* note 4, at 444.
  62. 12 *GW* *supra* note 1, at 14; *SL*, *supra* note 4, at 580.
  63. The deductions are indeed hypothetical in form, not the principle that grounds them.
  64. This interpretation would be equivalent to presenting Plato with the alternative: either the ideas are real, or they are thoughts, but not both.
  65. An in-depth analysis of Parmenides' poem is beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be mentioned that a version of the identity of being and thinking may well be already foreshadowed in the poet's words in Diels and Kranz 1, 28 B 3 ('[T]he same it is to think and also to be [*to gar auto noein estin te kai einai*]').
  66. Parmenides 139c–e.
  67. 12 *GW* 17; *SL* 583.
  68. Diels & Kranz, 28 B 8, 3–4.
  69. *Id.* 28 B 8, 30.
  70. Parmenides 139c–e.
  71. *Id.* 139c.
  72. *Id.* 139d–e. ('Neither will it be the same as itself [*oude men tauton ge heauto estai*]').
  73. Parmenides 139e.
  74. *Id.*
  75. This is the case of course also in other dialogues preceding and following the Parmenides: See e.g. *Politeia* 436b; and *Sophistes* 230b and 263 b.
  76. 12 *GW* p. 15; *SL*, *supra* note 4, at 582.

# 5

## History, Concepts and Normativity in Hegel

*Dario Perinetti\**

### Introduction

That Hegel somehow linked history with logic is almost universally taken to be one of his most original contributions to philosophy. Many, of course, would grant that this link is an original but a philosophically uninteresting move. One only needs to consult the official histories of logic to see that Hegel's *Logic* plays no role.<sup>1</sup> Others would concede there might be something philosophical about the link, but that the connection Hegel hinted at is really one between history and metaphysics, rather than between history and logic. Thus, if the enterprise carries any interest at all it must lie in its contribution to metaphysics, not to logic or semantics. A more sympathetic account would consider Hegel's departure from traditional logic and insist that his originality lies in the attempt to come to terms with the 'logic' of human historical existence.

I suggest that, in fact, the linking of logic to history was neither an original Hegelian contribution, nor a distinctive feature of German idealism or romanticism. Linking history to logic was not an uncommon undertaking during the entire eighteenth century and was by no means an exclusively German concern. If the argument, then, is in part meant to deflate the so-called originality of Hegel's position or of German Idealism in general, I hope that the end result will not be sheer disenchantment. Showing how Hegel's position stands in relation to a more general endeavour to relate our conceptual capacities with our historical existence will help to locate where exactly lies the originality of his contribution. After briefly presenting previous attempts to link history with logic, I will explain in what sense Hegel's genetic account of concepts is a history. More specifically, I will show how Hegel's genetic account of concepts stands in relation to other competing genetic accounts, particularly to naturalistic ones. In this respect I will argue:

1. Hegel's theory of concepts is a conceptual history and, as such, like naturalistic conceptions of logic, is descriptive rather than prescriptive.

2. The descriptive character of Hegel's logic does not imply that the theory is non-normative. A conceptual history will be shown to be a description of relations between concepts, rather than of facts about concepts.
3. Hegel's position does not entail a rejection of naturalistic accounts of concept acquisition. It only entails a rejection of the naturalistic standpoint as an adequate one for grounding a philosophical understanding of concepts.

## Post-Cartesian logics and history

The early modern approach to logic was in part prompted by Descartes' complaint that Aristotelian logic centered exclusively on justifying already known propositions. Traditional logic consisted, in Descartes' view, in merely stipulating truth-preserving rules for connecting already known propositions. It amounted to showing, according to Descartes, that propositions that we were predisposed to accept were valid, that is, acceptable. Justifying already accepted knowledge was, in Descartes view, a sort of mechanical approach to logic and reasoning; one in which, as he put it, 'reason goes on Holiday.'<sup>2</sup> Post-Cartesian logics were designed to be manuals in the art, or practice of thinking, an idea that was captured in titles like *L'art de penser*.<sup>3</sup> As manuals of the practice, or art, of thinking, these logics involved both a reflection on how the materials of that practice (i.e. the concepts) become available for those involved in the practice and on how the rules for what counts as a correct move in the practice of thinking emerge out of a reflection on accepted practice.

These logics, particularly the empiricist ones, were *historical* first of all in a trivial sense. *Historical* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was synonymous with *empirical*; the use thus reflected the perceived common feature of any descriptive disciplines (e.g. natural and civil histories were perceived as two different species of the same genus).<sup>4</sup> In this trivial sense, logics were also histories insofar as they contained a description of concept acquisition – that is, insofar as they gave a factual account of how concepts become available to a knower. They were also histories insofar as they described how inferential rules related to factually describable psychological dispositions, such as association, memory, and so forth. Locke, for instance, after having presented in the *Essay* an account of the human faculties designed to 'discover them in their rise, progress, and gradual improvements'<sup>5</sup> claims to have given 'a short, and ... true *History of the first beginnings of Humane Knowledge ...*'.<sup>6</sup>

This psychological flavour given to the connection between history and logic develops in some eighteenth century logics into a wider notion with some cultural and truly historical overtones. That is the case of Duncan's *The Elements of Logic*, one of the most popular logics in eighteenth century England.<sup>7</sup> Duncan holds that both the inner structure of the mind and

human cognitive faculties are not static dispositions inherent to human nature but admit perfection and progress. In addition, Duncan states that differences in culture and historical development must also play a role in explaining differences in logical and cognitive competence between human beings.<sup>8</sup> The structure of the mind, he claims, mirrors the structure of the development of culture. Duncan's introduction of cultural and historical development in the explanation of the acquisition of concepts and the development of the faculties gives a special flavour to his claims that logic is 'the History of the human Mind.'<sup>9</sup>

It is then not surprising to find that philosophies of history, a genre emerging by mid-eighteenth century, tend to have a logical structure. Many philosophies of history, particularly in the French and Scottish Enlightenment, were intended to show how the development of culture, economy, and civilisation were closely related to the development of human cognitive and logical capacities.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, in Germany the conception of logic as the history of the mind was couched in a special language. Logic was thought by some philosophers, such as Ernst Platner, to be 'a pragmatic, that is, a critical history of the human power of cognition.'<sup>11</sup> This assertion is to be found in Platner's *Philosophische Aphorismen*, a book that was used by Fichte in his lectures on logic and metaphysics,<sup>12</sup> and one that Hegel certainly knew.<sup>13</sup> Although Platner understands pragmatic history as almost a synonym of psychological explanation, the notion was mostly used to denote a conceptually organized genetic account in contrast to one that would merely put a series of facts in temporal order. This was, for example, the view of Salomon Maimon who thought that philosophical histories should not be *bloß historisch* (merely factual reports). A 'pragmatic history of philosophy,' he writes, 'must be written a priori' and 'should present not opinions of philosophers but ways of thinking, not writings but methods, not disconnected witty ideas (Einfälle) but systems.'<sup>14</sup>

## Hegel's conceptual history

Hegel understands the relation of logic to history in a substantially different way. For him, I submit, a concept is the history of the way a place in a contextually defined inferential space has been determined. The history Hegel has in mind is the history of the way the determinations of a concept have been fixed by reference to contextually defined relations of material incompatibility, or to say it in Hegelian language, by reference to the determinate negations that constitute it as concept. I borrow the expression 'material incompatibility relations' from Robert Brandom who uses it as an interpretation of Hegel's determinate negation. According to this reading, the process of determination is more than a process of specification or finding differences among concepts; it is one of establishing relations of

incompatibility or exclusion between them. Hence, that a concept is determinate or has a specific *content* entails that it stands in material incompatibility relations. These relations of incompatibility, in turn, set constraints for the use of the concept in question. To say that a concept stands in material incompatibility relations with other concepts is to say that some inferential moves from or to that concept are possible and others are not. A concept is, thus, the result of this process of determination, a process that by defining relations of incompatibility with other concepts generates an *inferential context* and, hence, a *logical space*.<sup>15</sup> By inferential context, I understand the group of concepts against which a particular concept stand in concrete, material, inferential relations, and through the mediation of which a concept becomes a *concrete universal*. By logical space, I understand the system of interrelated concepts that is thus generated.

Let me first consider the role that inferential context plays in determining the content of a concept. Hegel shares with many post-Cartesian thinkers the idea that logic is essentially concerned with explaining how inferential relations are content related and not purely pre-given, formal truth-preserving procedures for relating conceptual content that is independently given to consciousness.

Hitherto, the Notion of logic has rested on the separation, presupposed once and for all in the ordinary consciousness, of the *content* of cognition and its *form*, or of *truth* and *certainty*. First, it is assumed that the material of knowing is present on its own account as a ready-made world apart from thought, that thinking on its own is empty and comes as an external form to the said material, fills itself with it and only thus acquires a content and so becomes real knowing.<sup>16</sup>

The logic he wants to put forward is one that understands it is its particular content, and not a pre-given rule that defines an inferential context for any given concept. For example, it is by virtue of what I know about 'salt' and 'ice' that I will accept the following reasoning: There is ice in the sidewalk. I had better spread some salt.

I will accept this reasoning, as such, without requiring further premises or middle terms, enabling me to determine that the proposition 'I had better spread some salt' is a valid conclusion for an argument in which 'There is ice in the sidewalk' is the first premise.<sup>17</sup> It is then by virtue of the knowledge I have of the content of the concepts 'salt' and 'ice,' though of course not of these concepts alone, that I can claim to know what inferential moves are open to me. Performing these inferences implies generating claims for the use of the concepts 'salt' or 'ice,' claims that can be accepted or contested. In the process of giving and asking for reasons with respect to the use of a concept an inferential context is generated. The insistence on the contextual dimension of the place of a concept in a logical space lies in



that *determinate negation* always defines a logical place for a concept with respect to other relevant pieces of knowledge. 'Salt is not sweet' is relevant information for someone who wants to reliably use the concept 'salt,' but 'salt is not an elephant' is not relevant information to specify contexts for using 'salt.'

Hegel contends, unlike previous logicians,<sup>18</sup> that it is precisely this inferential context defined by relations of determinate negation that determines what the content of a concept is: 'Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation it has *content*.'<sup>19</sup> The only way to know the content of 'salt' is to know that it is not sweet, that it helps melt the ice in the sidewalks, that it is sodium chloride, and so forth.<sup>20</sup> In other words, Hegel brings about what appears to be a circular argument: (a) conceptual content defines a context for possible and relevant material inferential commitments, and (b) the place of material inferential commitments defined by this context is all that is the content of a concept. The claim is not, however, viciously circular, as the argument neither requires that possession of a concept explains knowledge of the inferential context, nor that knowledge of the inferential context explains the individuation of conceptual content. It only claims that knowledge of a concept helps to determine a relevant inferential context and knowledge of an inferential context helps to determine the content of a concept. A concept is thus an inferential placeholder, or as Robert Brandom likes to say, an inferential role.<sup>21</sup> Hence, a concept does not merely have a place in an inferential context, a concept *is* a logical place in an inferential context. A concept is the system of relations defining its inferential role.

Let us now briefly consider the notion of *logical space*. As we will see, understanding the notion of conceptual history, or of a purely conceptual genetic account of concepts, is instrumental in understanding how Hegel's conception of a logical space differs from Kant's. Kant treats a logical space as given and, furthermore, as given with a series of predetermined jurisdictions or territories with their own respective legislations. According to Kant:

Concepts, insofar as they are related to objects, regardless of whether cognition of the latter is possible or not, have their field, which is determined merely in accordance with the relation which their object has to our faculty of cognition in general. – The part of this field within which cognition is possible for us is a territory (*territorium*) for these concepts and the requisite faculty of cognition. The part of the territory in which these are legislative is the domain (*ditio*) of these concepts and of the corresponding faculty of cognition. Thus empirical concepts do indeed have their territory in nature, as the set of all objects of sense, but no domain (only their residence, *domicilium*); because they are, to be sure, lawfully generated, but are not legislative, rather than the rules grounded on them

are empirical, hence contingent. Our cognitive faculty as a whole has two domains, that of the concepts of nature and that of the concept of freedom; for it is *a priori* through both.<sup>22</sup>

Concepts have, for Kant, different *rights* according to the place they occupy in a logical space. The logical space, however, is conceived as being framed by the *a priori* structure of our cognitive powers, so that the limitation of rights derives from a limitation in our power of cognition. The logical space is also not infinitely extensible, at least not in the part of its territory constituted by intuitions. For Kant, intuitions are concepts that are determined but not further determinable. They have an intension, or a determinate series of 'marks' but they have no extension – that is, no further concept falls under them. In other words, intuitions are purely singular representations.<sup>23</sup> For that reason, intuitions are a limit to the logical space. In Kant's opinion, the limit helps to determine the rights that concepts of the understanding have to claims to objective validity. Being pure intension (pure content) without extension (with no subordinate concepts) an intuition is what is *given* to the understanding. The limit of the logical space is, thus, delineated by the content given at one of its limits. For Kant, the mind has the ability to specify rules for picking up intuitions but it cannot specify or determine intuitive content. Showing that a conceptual rule synthesizes content as given by singular representations or intuition sets, for Kant, a criterion for showing that the conceptual rule is *correctly* applied and yields a claim to knowledge.

Hegel sees both the concept/intuition distinction and the *a priori* structure of the logical space as setting unjustified limits to our freedom to specify particulars in the logical space, and to our freedom to demarcate reflectively the logical territory of concepts. In Hegel's case, the logical space is a product of reflection, of the activity of determinate negation.<sup>24</sup> The right of a concept to a given place in the logical space is determined by its being recognized in actual, describable practices of inference. Moreover, there is for Hegel no *a priori* limit to the capacity of further determining any given concept. In other words, there are no purely singular concepts, since every concept is given a place in the logical space as a result of a process of mediation with other concepts. Insofar as conceiving is to define a place for a concept, there can be no *a priori* boundaries or limitations to this logical space, as any new determination modifies the inferential context in which a given concept plays a role. The logical space is hence infinite, though of course not in the sense that it admits an indiscriminate proliferation – a kind of cancerous tissue of concepts that would be entirely free of constraints. Any further extension or modification of the logical space is the result of a process of mediation with other concepts, a process in which the resulting rearrangement of logical places has to be recognized.

### A sui generis history of concepts

Let me recall at this point the concept of pragmatic history as Platner or Maimon used it. Fichte claimed that transcendental philosophers 'are not the legislators of the human mind but its historians – not, to be sure, journalists but writers of pragmatic history.'<sup>25</sup> In the second part of the *Foundation*, he claimed that once we accept the reality of reflection, transcendental philosophy ceases to proceed by framing mere hypotheses about the relation between the I and the not-I, and starts describing acts of consciousness. Insofar as these acts of consciousness are constitutive of reality, he claims, we should view the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a 'pragmatic history of the human mind.'<sup>26</sup> Fichte certainly did not mean to argue that the *Wissenschaftslehre* was a straightforward natural history or cognitive psychology in the sense of Platner. His position was closer to Maimon's use, namely, to see pragmatic history as putting a series of facts in conceptual rather than in causal or temporal relation. In other words, pragmatic history looks for the sense or meaning of a series of facts.

In the Jena *Aphorisms*, Hegel acknowledges this history of consciousness to be Fichte's contribution: 'Only by way of the history of consciousness does one know, through the concept, what one has in these abstractions. *Fichte's merit*.'<sup>27</sup> However, he gives a slightly different characterisation of his own history of consciousness, the 1807 *Phenomenology*. Instead of referring to the Fichtean *pragmatische Geschichte des Geistes*, Hegel claims that his *Phenomenology* is a *begriffen Geschichte des Geistes* – that is, not a pragmatic but, rather, a conceptual history of *spirit*. Hegel prefers to qualify that history of conceptual rather than pragmatic because he might have thought that pragmatic insufficiently captures the logical dimension of his genetic account of the concept. Pragmatic history, in Hegel's view, is mostly concerned with providing causal explanations for historical events.<sup>28</sup> Good indications of Hegel's unwillingness to adopt the notion of pragmatic history are his own remarks on history in the section on the 'Determinate Relation of Causality' in the *Science of Logic*, where he complains about the 'inadmissible application of the relation of causality to relations of *physico-organic* and *spiritual life*.'<sup>29</sup> In his opinion, '[i]n history generally, spiritual masses and individuals are in play and reciprocal determination [*Wechselbestimmung*];'<sup>30</sup> that is, they stand in logical rather than in merely causal relation to one another. To represent historical events as following from causes such as the contingent intentions of agents or the climate of a nation – as pragmatic historians did – is to miss the point of what we want to understand in history, making it (*die Geschichte*), as Hegel puts elsewhere, 'sink in this way into a play of vacuous activity and contingent events.'<sup>31</sup> All in all, pragmatic history is still, for Hegel, in the position of understanding (*verstehen*) not of conceiving (*begreifen*). It is a critical attempt to make sense of pragmatic history that remains uncritical about the explanatory categories it uses.<sup>32</sup>

Conceptual history is then a description of how concepts and a logical space are generated in the process of reciprocal determination proper to *spiritual life*. It is not a description of facts but a description of the way meaning is generated through the process of determination. For that reason, Hegel's genetic account of concepts is not meant to legislate concept use but to describe how legality emerges in actual thinking. Telling the story of how concepts acquire a place in a logical space does not need to imply that conceptual usurpation becomes immediately legal, as Kant might fear. It is not an implication of Hegel's position that any concept that is used thereby acquires a right to be used. A conceptual history tells the story of how concepts are given a place in the logical space out of reciprocal determination – that is, out of a process that is normative and legal from its very start without thereby ceasing to be descriptive. Usurpations of a logical place – errors – are always possible, but they will not stand the test of consistency with other accepted commitments. It can always be shown that this particular use of the concept yields inferential commitments that are inconsistent with other relevant commitments we are not ready to revise. The process of revision is a process of reciprocal determination in which one seeks to preserve the stability of the system. But the process of concept determination is precisely always a revision of the commitments implicit in the use of that concept. A conceptual history is, thus, essentially a process of correction and revision. The history of a concept (and of course the history of *the* concept) is the search for a correct description of it.

### Conceptual v. natural history

Now, one can legitimately ask, why should we prefer Hegel's history of concepts to other competing genetic accounts? What is it about the Hegelian account that other accounts lack, compelling us to become absolute idealists? And what does it entail to adopt the Hegelian story? For instance, does it imply a rejection of any contribution that evolutionary theory or psychology could make to our understanding of concepts? Hegel devotes an important portion of the section 'The Concept in General' to distinguish his own genetic account of concepts from both the traditional understanding of logic as the history of the mind, and from Kant's own account:

A capital misunderstanding which prevails on this point is that the *natural* principle or the *beginning* which forms the starting point in the *natural* evolution or in the *history* [*Geschichte*] of the developing individual, is regarded as the *truth*, and the *first* in the *Notion*. Now in the order of nature, intuition or being are undoubtedly first, or are the condition for the Notion, but they are not on that account the absolutely unconditioned; on the contrary, their reality is sublated in the Notion and with it, too, the illusory show [*Schein*] they possessed of being the conditioning reality. When it is a question, not of *truth* but merely of

*history* [*Historie*], as in pictorial and phenomenal thinking [*im Vorstellen und dem erscheinenden Denken*], we need not of course go beyond merely narrating that we start with feelings and intuitions and that from the manifold of these the understanding extracts a universality or an abstraction and naturally requires for this purpose the said substrate of feelings and intuitions which, in this process of abstraction, remains for representation [*Vorstellen*] in the same complete reality with which it first presented itself.<sup>33</sup>

There are, thus, two ways of telling what is first in an account of concepts depending on whether we follow the order of nature or a logical order. In the order of nature, what is first is the causal or temporal antecedent of a concept, or an intentional state. I do not think, however, that Hegel means to reject the relevance or the interest of a naturalistic history of concepts. His claim is, rather, that one should not confound the two accounts, as Hegel believes many philosophers do and as Kant does in particular. Particularly not if one is doing philosophy.

Hegel claims that the description of the genesis of concepts varies depending on the standpoint one adopts:

[T]he relation of the understanding or the Notion to the stages *presupposed* by it, the *form* of these stages is determined by the particular science under consideration. In our science, that of pure *logic*, these stages are *being* and *essence*. In *psychology* the antecedent stages are *feeling* and *intuition*, and then *ideation* generally.<sup>34</sup>

From the standpoint of psychology or natural science, concepts are treated extensionally, that is, as rules purporting to pick up individuals in the world or referring to a domain of entities. As such, they are said to have a reference to the object they represent, reference that could ultimately be explained in causal terms.<sup>35</sup> From the standpoint of Hegelian logic, concepts are on the contrary treated intentionally as bearers of semantic properties or marks, and as standing in relations of determinate negation to other contextually related concepts. In the former case, concepts are forms that map (extensionally defined) content; in the latter case, concepts are forms and content at once. The logical standpoint on concepts entails a non-referential theory that does not seek to explain how concepts represent non-conceptual content; rather, it seeks to explain how to organise conceptual content in a classificatory system.<sup>36</sup> In simple terms, a non-referential theory of concepts aims at making sense rather than at representing and preserving the truth of representation.

Hegel thinks that the confusion between a natural history and a purely conceptual genetic account derives from the inability of previous philosophers to see that inferential relations can be conceived as generating

content. According to Hegel, a representational view on Notions, 'leaves all manifoldness *outside* the Notion and attributes to the latter only the form of abstract universality or the empty identity of reflection ...'.<sup>37</sup> Failing to see how a strictly logical standpoint can nevertheless deal with content relations is the main reason for the appeal of representationalism. Hegel thinks Kant best exemplifies this confusion of standpoints, since Kant's theory of apperception brings about a genuine idealist standpoint that is unduly limited by the dualism of concept and intuition. This dualism is, in Hegel's view, a relic of the psychological standpoint to Notions: 'It is in keeping with this standpoint, too, that the Notion without the manifold of intuition is again declared to be *empty* and *devoid of content* despite the fact that it is a synthesis *a priori*; as such, it surely does contain determinateness and difference within itself.'<sup>38</sup>

Although the cogency of Hegel's non-referential approach to concepts cannot be explored in detail here, let us grant, for the sake of the argument, that it is a viable project. Does accepting this theory imply a rejection of alternative natural histories of the mind? Does it imply that we should stop doing science and dedicate ourselves exclusively to classifying meanings? Should Hegelians advise their colleagues in more 'scientific' departments to stop using causal vocabulary, and introduce sublation or determinate negation in their laboratories? I think that Hegel's answer is a blunt no. For the task of making sense would be truly empty had meaning not been brought about in concrete scientific as well as nonscientific practices.

Hegel explains how he understands the relation of philosophy to the empirical sciences in the *Encyclopaedia*. He contends:

Not only must philosophy be in agreement with our empirical knowledge of Nature, but the *origin* and *formation* of the Philosophy of Nature [*philosophischen Wissenschaft*] presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics. However, the course of a science's origin and the preliminaries of its construction are one thing, while the science itself is another. In the latter, the former can no longer appear as the foundation of the science; here, the foundation must be the necessity of the Notion.<sup>39</sup>

Something similar could be said about the origin of logic. Previous logics and metaphysics furnish the concepts about concepts that the Hegelian philosopher will revise following the dialectical method. In the course of this revision, where the systematicity of this body of concepts is taken into consideration, the referential assumptions underlying previous undertakings are abandoned, as reference will make the systemic coherence of the body of concepts depend on an order that is heteronomous to our reason.

The absolute standpoint is one that starts with the concepts as they are produced in accepted or authoritative practices in a given domain, in this

case logic, and will revise their consistency from a purely conceptual point of view of the freedom of the concept. The modest task that the Hegelian takes on is to try to make sense of what has been produced in those accepted scientific and nonscientific practices in order to put this content in a logical space in which their significance to human life can be questioned and revised. The importance of adopting the logical standpoint lies in that it is the only standpoint that conceives of meaning as ‘absolutely unconditioned’;<sup>40</sup> that is, it is the sole standpoint that gives us entire freedom in the task of making sense of the world, the only one that truly presupposes our autonomy as subjects. Treating concepts as the absolutely unconditioned – that is, treating them as non-referential knots of semantic properties generating a logical space through relations of determinate negation – helps to place the conceptual results of the different human practices in a space in which we are the source of normativity. For, to be an unconditioned knot of semantic properties that acquires a place in a space of reasons thanks to relations of mutual recognition with other similar knots is precisely what it is to be a subject.

## Notes

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1. See, e.g. Joseph M. Bochenski, *Formal Logik [A History of Formal Logic]* 3–4 (Ivo Thomas trans., Chelsea Publishing Co. 2d ed., 1970) (1956); William Kneale & Martha Kneale, *The Development of Logic* (1962).
2. René Descartes, *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii*, in *10 Oeuvres de Descartes* 405–6 (Charles Adam & Paul Tannery eds. 1996).
3. As the authors of the *Port-Royal Logic* observe, ‘this art does not consist in finding the means to perform these operations, since nature alone furnishes them in giving us reason, but in reflecting on what nature makes us do . . .’. Antoine Arnauld & Pierre Nicole, *Logic or the Art of Thinking* 23 (Jill Vance Buroker trans. 1996).
4. On the association between *empirical* and *historical*, see Dario Perinetti, *Philosophical Reflection on History*, in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (Knud Haakonssen ed., 2004); Arno Seifert, *Cognitio Historica: die Geschichte als Namengeberin der Frühneuzeitlichen Empirie* (1976). Voltaire’s entry *Histoire* to D’Alembert’s and Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* contains the first noticed protestation about this association. See 8 *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* (220–1 1751–72).
5. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 2.11.14 (Peter Harold Nidditch ed., 1979).
6. *Id.* 2.11.15.
7. William Duncan, *The Elements of Logic* (1748).
8. *Id.* at 3. David Hume also draws attention to the significant link between acquisition of culture and development of cognitive faculties. See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 9.5 n.20 (Tom L. Beauchamp ed., 2000); see also David Hume, *Of the Study of History*, in *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary* 563, 566–7 (Eugene F. Miller ed., 1987).



9. Duncan, *supra* note 7, at 3–4.
10. See, e.g. Dario Perinetti, *supra* note 4; Bertrand Binoche, *Les trois sources des philosophies de l'histoire: (1764–1798)* (1994); Roger L. Emerson, 'Conjectural in History and Scottish Philosophers,' in *Historical Papers/Communications Historiques* 63–90 (1984).
11. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *4 Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, in *Werke* (series II Supp.) 16 (Reinhard Lauth & Hans Jacob eds., 1962 ) (quoting Ernst Platner, *Ernst Platners philosophische Aphorismen nebst einigen Anleitungen zur philosophischen Geschichte* (1776)). Platner's *Aphorismen* was first published 1776. The book, however, was considerably revised after the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and augmented with numerous remarks addressing Kant's philosophy.
12. *Id.* at vi.
13. Hegel possessed a copy of the 1784 edition. See Verzeichniß der von dem Professor Herrn Dr. Hegel und dem Dr. Herrn Seebeck, hinterlassene Bücher Sammlungen 9 (C. J. Müller ed., 1832).
14. Salomon Maimon, *4 Gesammelte Werke* 28 (Valerio Verra ed., 1970), my translation. For an excellent article on the notion of *pragmatic history* as discussed in the works of Platner, Maimon, and Fichte, see Daniel Breazeale, 'Fichte's Conception of Philosophy as a "Pragmatic History of the Human Mind" and the Contributions of Kant, Platner, and Maimon', 62 *J. Hist. Ideas* 685 (2001).
15. See Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* 178–209 (2002). See generally Robert Brandom, *Making it Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* 32, 89–90, 97–105 (1994). My reliance on Brandom's reading of Hegel is limited to his interpretation of 'determinate negation' as material incompatibility relations.
16. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 44 (Arthur Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter *SL*]; 21 G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* 28 (1968) [hereinafter *GW*].
17. To add to the contextualist claim, the reader must keep in mind that this chapter was written in Canada where this piece of wintry reasoning is all too common.
18. Although, on this issue, Hegel was, of course, influenced by Spinoza's understanding of negation.
19. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 54; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 38.
20. Hegel charges post-Cartesian logics of not precisely seeing the role of logical categories in instituting conceptual content. See *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 38–9; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 16–17.
21. He discusses the notion of inferential role in Robert Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (2000).
22. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* 61–6 (Paul Guyer trans., 2000) (on file with author); Immanuel Kant 5 *Gesammelte Schriften* (ed. Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1900 at 174 [hereinafter *Ak.*].
23. In his lectures on logic Kant states: 'the content and extension of a concept stand in inverse relation to one another (p. 593).' He means that the more intension (content) a concept has the more particular it is. For that reason he calls intuitions sometimes *conceptus singulares* or *representatio singularis*. See Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on logic, Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* 205, 589 and 593 (J. Michael Young trans., 1992); 9 *Ak*, *supra* note 22 at 91 and 95j; 24 *Ak*, *supra* note 22, at 257 .



## 24. Hegel states:

Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation it has a *content*. It is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation or opposite of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite. It is in this way that the system of Notions as such has to be formed – and has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced.

*SL*, *supra* note 16, at 54; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 38.

25. Fichte, 1 *Gesamtausgabe*, *supra* note 11, at 147 ('nicht Gesetzgeber des menschlichen Geistes, sondern seine Historiographen. freilich nicht Zeitungsschreiber, sondern pragmatische Geschichtsschreiber.').
26. *Id.* at 364–5 My translation.
27. See 5 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 502. My translation.
28. G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* [hereinafter cited as *Enz*] §140 Zusatz and § 377 Zusatz, in 8–10 *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* (Eva Moldenhauer & Karl M. Michel eds) [hereinafter cited as *Werke*]; G.W.F. Hegel, 'Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie', 20 *Werke* at 495; G.W.F. Hegel, 'Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts', 7 *Werke* at 36; G.W.F. Hegel, 'Fragment zur Philosophie des Geistes', 11 *Werke* at 519.
29. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 562; 11 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 400.
30. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 562; 11 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 400.
31. G.W.F. Hegel, 'Fragment zur Philosophie des Geistes', 11 *Werke*, *supra* note 28, at 519. My translation.
32. The extent to which Hegel's modification of the Fichtean characterization implies a criticism of Fichte's method is beyond the scope of this Chapter.
33. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 588; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 21–2.
34. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 586; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 19.
35. I do not mean that adopting a semantics centred on the notion of reference entails adopting a causal theory of meaning, although it is probable that Hegel might have so linked the two.
36. I am indebted here to a very good article: Brigitte Falkenburg, 'How to Save the Phenomena: Meaning and Reference in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature', in *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature* 97 (Stephen Houlgate ed., 1998).
37. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 588–9; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 22.
38. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 589; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 23.
39. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* § 246 Remark, at 6 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1970); cf. 'Hegel', 9 *Werke*, *supra* note 28, § 246 Remark.
40. *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 588; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 22; see also *SL*, *supra* note 16, at 591; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 16, at 24.

# 6

## The Concept and Its Double: Power and Powerlessness in Hegel's Subjective Logic

Iain Macdonald

### Introduction

In a well known passage from the end of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes that the dialectical method is to be recognized 'as the absolutely infinite force [*die schlechthin unendliche Kraft*], to which no object, presenting itself as external, remote from and independent of reason, could offer resistance or be of a particular nature in opposition to it, or could not be penetrated by it.'<sup>1</sup> The power of reason is infinite and irresistible or, in a word, absolute – which means first and foremost that reason understood as the movement of the concept reveals the '*soul and substance*'<sup>2</sup> of things in such a way that, in principle, they are in themselves completely given over to and unravelled by the Concept. The method 'is therefore not only the highest *force*, or rather the *sole* and absolute *force* of reason,' says Hegel, 'but also its supreme and sole *urge* to find and cognize *itself by means of itself in everything*.'<sup>3</sup> The dialectical method, understood as absolute power, entitles us to adopt an attitude of *logical optimism* in respect of anything that presents itself as resistant to reason.

What is sometimes overlooked, and which may seem strange at first blush, is that the many mentions of force and power (absolute power, absolute force, infinite power, the power of the negative, the power of the Concept, etc.) that are scattered throughout the works are doubled by other passages where Hegel speaks of various forms of impotence or powerlessness (*Ohnmacht*). What is powerlessness? In effect, for Hegel, powerlessness generally designates a defect or a deficiency, or a kind of laziness or contingent immaturity that prevents the Concept from fully realizing itself, even though its power is, on another level, absolute. Powerlessness (*Ohnmacht*) is a *lack* of power (*Macht*). But it remains to be determined exactly how something that is, on one level, absolute power, can on another level (seemingly) be related to a relative lack of power. If power is absolute power, then why is it that a *little* power isn't always enough? Or alternatively, why does powerlessness have a role to play at all in a system where the power of

the Concept determines everything inexorably? How do these two terms relate to each other in Hegel's thought, especially in the context of the Subjective Logic?

At the outset, it's important to note that there are two main forms of powerlessness in Hegel's thought, both of which are mentioned in the Subjective Logic, in the section on 'The Concept in General.' Of the two, the so-called 'powerlessness of nature' (*die Ohnmacht der Natur*) is the better known form, but Hegel also mentions a strange 'subjective powerlessness of reason' (*eine subjective Ohnmacht der Vernunft*). This second form of powerlessness is quite enigmatic, especially given the strong claims made in relation to the 'absolute force' of reason elsewhere in the *Logic* and in the works. My aim here is to explore this second form of powerlessness, but in order to do so, it will be necessary to lay out what Hegel means by the powerlessness of nature and, correspondingly, what he means by the absolute power of the concept.

### The powerlessness of nature

As regards the powerlessness of nature, Hegel first notes that 'the universal determines *itself*, and so is itself the particular,'<sup>4</sup> by which he means that the universal contains difference within itself; the universal as Concept is a principle of negative unity (*negative Einheit*) or 'the totality and principle of its diversity, which is determined wholly and solely by the universal itself.'<sup>5</sup> A simple illustration of this relation between universality and particularity, though too determinate and representational, could be given by the set of all prime numbers, whereby the concept 'prime number' gives the principle of inclusion whereby a great diversity of particulars are assembled and unified. The ostensible differences between 2, 17, 31, and so on, are negated (or suspended) by the concept of 'prime number,' which sees in this diversity a unity that sublates difference in articulating a principle of totality.

The particular Concept in its pure form is then nothing but self-determined universality or, what amounts to the same thing, the principle of sublated diversity. Consequently, Hegel will say that the universal contains both the universal itself (understood as a negative *unity* of determinate diversity), and the particular (understood as the negative unity of *determinate diversity*). Or as he puts it, the genus 'universal' has only two species: the universal itself and the particular. It is at this point that he introduces the powerlessness of nature. 'In *nature*, of course,' he writes, 'there are to be found more than two species in a genus, just as between these many species there cannot exist [the relational difference between universal and particular]. This is the impotence of nature, that it cannot adhere to and exhibit the rigour of the Concept and runs wild in blind irrational [conceptless, *begrifflos*] multiplicity.'<sup>6</sup> Hegel clarifies this thought in

the *Encyclopædia*, where he writes that the sheer diversity of species and of often bizarre, utterly contingent natural forms presents us, at best, only with abstract 'traces of determination by the Concept'<sup>7</sup> (*Spuren der Begriffsbestimmung*). Nature cannot itself provide us with the principle of its organization, the self-determining universal that allows us to understand how genus, species, and seeming exceptions<sup>8</sup> relate to each other. Quite simply, nature fails 'to remain true to the Concept and to adhere to thought-determinations in their purity.'<sup>9</sup> In other words, the reflective specification of its own conceptual determination is not something that nature itself does or can do. Hence the goal of nature is 'to consume itself like the phoenix,' as Hegel puts it, 'in order to come forth from this externality rejuvenated as spirit.'<sup>10</sup> The powerlessness of nature is therefore an objective inability to articulate the principle of its own articulation; nature is a mere blind, conceptless multiplicity until thought surges up from within it to grasp what otherwise remains implicit. The concept that is only a trace or a potentiality, *an sich*, in nature becomes explicit in spirit.

### Absolute power

In the *Encyclopædia*, the powerlessness of nature is remedied by what Hegel calls 'the power of free spirit, which sublates [nature's] negativity';<sup>11</sup> this marks the passage to the philosophy of spirit. In the Doctrine of the Concept, however, this power of free spirit is treated in its pure logical form, as the '*absolute foundation*'<sup>12</sup> (*absolute Grundlage*), which has to be distinguished from spirit as such in its various determinate shapes. And so Hegel remarks that 'the logical form of the Concept is independent of its non-spiritual [i.e. natural], and also of its spiritual shapes.'<sup>13</sup> The Concept's concrete forms (*concreten Gestalten*) are of no interest here, because 'the Concept is to be regarded not as the act [*Actus*] of the self-conscious understanding, not as the *subjective understanding*, but as the Concept in its own absolute character which constitutes a *stage of nature* as well as of *spirit*.'<sup>14</sup> In the *Logic*, therefore, the discussion of power and powerlessness takes on a particular cast; it is aimed at making the Concept as Concept manifest in all its necessity, liberated from representational thinking and subjective determinations. But even here we find that the Concept can be conceived differently, according to the various moments of its presuppositionless development from the untenability of pure being through to the absolute Idea.

At the end of the Doctrine of Essence, Hegel had already embarked on an exploration of the absolute character of the Concept as power. The concept of substance, Hegel says there, when looked at from the standpoint of the '*form-unity*' (*Formeinheit*) of accidentality, must be regarded as '*absolute power*'<sup>15</sup> (*absolute Macht*). More specifically, he says: 'when substance, as self-identical *being-in-and-for-self*, is distinguished from itself as a totality of

*accidents*, that which mediates is substance as *power*. This is *necessity*,' he adds, 'the positive *persistence* of the accidents in their negativity and their mere *positedness* in their subsistence; this *middle term* is thus the unity of substantiality and accidentality themselves and its *extremes* have no subsistence of their own.'<sup>16</sup> In this passage, power is understood as that which binds a plurality of accidents together in the unity of substance; it is the mutual mediation of substantiality and accidentality in general. Substance is for this reason characterized as 'purely self-related *negativity*.'<sup>17</sup> It gathers up a diversity of mutually indifferent differences, negates these differences as differences, and binds them together in a unity. The unity in question is not an aggregate unity, of course, because the relation of substance to accidents is not a relation of conjunction or collection, but rather the very principle of negation by which a unification of difference is possible. In other words, substantiality is a way of describing purely self-determining universality; it is at once absolute determinateness and simple identity.

But substantiality is only formally or implicitly related to the absolute and independent foundation of the Concept. Substantiality needs to undergo an '*unveiling*'<sup>18</sup> (*Enthüllung*), by which the Concept in its purity is made explicit. This is why Hegel still calls it a '*formal power*'<sup>19</sup> (*formelle Macht*) at the end of the Doctrine of Essence. What is lacking in order to arrive at the concept of the Concept is twofold: first, the realization that a substance that is acted upon by another substance involves a positing, such as the positing of an effect by a cause, and second that this relation is *also* (like the *inner* relation of substance to accidents) a negation of difference, initiated by an agent who is free and able to realize himself in otherness. In a nutshell, what Hegel makes plain at the outset of the Subjective Logic is that substantiality implies a subject for whom and by whom the negative unity of substantiality is established. Hegel summarizes this twofold realization in the following way: 'This infinite reflection-into-self, namely, that being is in and for itself only insofar as it is posited, is the *consummation* [*Vollendung*] of substance. But this consummation is no longer *substance* itself but something higher, the *Concept*, the *subject*.'<sup>20</sup> We are meant to see, then, how the Objective Logic necessarily gives way to the Subjective Logic and demands the parallel articulation of Concept and subject. Substance on its own is still too determinate for us to plainly see that it is a facet of the Concept itself.

Hegel's claim is simple enough. It begins with the question posed by the Objective Logic: how are we to understand the self-related negative unity that characterizes all objectivity? Substance reveals itself to be insufficiently developed to be an adequate answer to the question: '*it is not the highest standpoint*,'<sup>21</sup> he says. This is what leads him to an examination of the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception, where the relation of Concept to subject is more manifest. The Kantian *I* is at once a universal synthetic principle *and* a determinate individual *I*. The synthetic unity of appercep-

tion, like the Concept, is a pure principle of negative unity, or a universal that particularizes itself: 'This absolute *universality* which is also an absolute *individualization* ... constitutes the nature of the *I* as well as of the Concept.'<sup>22</sup> Or in short, the 'I think that accompanies all my representations' is nothing other than the universal present in its determinations, and *vice versa*: the unification of difference.<sup>23</sup> But here again, transcendental apperception, like substance, doesn't go far enough. The 'original synthesis of apperception is one of the most profound principles for speculative development,' Hegel says, 'it contains the beginning of a true apprehension of the Concept.... The further development, however, does not fulfil the promise of the beginning.'<sup>24</sup> The Concept, then, is absolute power by virtue of the same negative unity that is at work in the synthetic unity of apperception. However, the synthetic unity of apperception does not give us a true apprehension of the Concept, that is, of the absolute Concept itself as pure relational difference. Hegel gives various reasons in various places for why Kant's vision is deficient. In the passage in question in the *Logic*, it is because Kant does not clarify the concepts of synthesis and manifold. In other words, had Kant understood that the Concept bears within it its own principle of determination, he would have concluded that it cannot be 'empty' on its own or dependent on the sensuous manifold for its content. Not only is the doctrine of non-conceptual intuitions the erroneous product of Kant's understanding of the Concept as a 'psychological reflex,'<sup>25</sup> but the categories themselves, in addition to the synthetic unity of apperception, are shown to be derivative of the absolute Concept. In the *Phenomenology*, the claim that there is a plurality of categories is even said to be *more* 'absurd' or 'incomprehensible'<sup>26</sup> (*unbegrifflicher*) than self-consciousness misunderstanding itself. Why is the plurality of categories *more* absurd than a self-consciousness that is opaque to itself? Because the *plurality* of categories presupposes the negative unity that makes the categories categories in the first place, which should have led Kant to bring out the concept of the Concept that clarifies how unity and difference relate to one another. For these reasons, Kant's philosophy fails to fulfil the promise of its beginning.

To put it bluntly, Kant (like Spinoza) failed to appreciate what was at work in his own thought, which means that there is still an 'unthought' element or a one-sidedness to his thinking that prevented the concept of the Concept from being made explicit prior to Hegel's intervention in the history of philosophy. More specifically, the Concept as absolute power is only present implicitly in the concept of substance and in the synthetic unity of apperception. What is this absolute power? Again, nothing but the self-related negative unity of the self-determining universal. Thought necessarily requires this dynamized relationship between universal, particular, and individual, and experience is only possible on this basis, but prior to Hegel it is only ever represented by way of *other* concepts. The concept of

the Concept is not *a* determinate concept, after all, but *the* Concept understood as this power of self-related negativity.

But the question is: how is it that Kant (or Spinoza, for that matter) could have failed to develop his thought logically toward the concept of the Concept? Why couldn't they see, within the framework of philosophical treatments of the necessary and the *a priori*, that substance and apperception presuppose the concept of the Concept as subject and object? Or to put it another way, how can it be that the absolute power of the Concept wasn't powerful enough to break through in thought prior to Hegel? Why is it that a *little* power isn't always enough? And can the answer to this question be given in the context of a subjective logic?

### The powerlessness of reason

Hegel's answer to this question is fleeting and enigmatic. In the pages following his presentation of universality and particularity and the mention of the powerlessness of nature, Hegel analyzes the 'fixity' (*Festigkeit*) of the understanding in relation to reason. He concludes his discussion with the following passage:

Since ... understanding [*der Verstand*] exhibits the infinite force [*die unendliche Kraft*] which determines the universal, or conversely, imparts through the form of universality a fixity and subsistence to the determinateness that is in and for itself transitory, then it is not the fault of the understanding if no progress is made beyond this point. It is a subjective *powerlessness of reason* [*eine subjective Ohnmacht der Vernunft*] which adopts these determinatenesses in their fixity, and which is unable [*nicht ... vermag*] to bring them back to their unity through the dialectical force [*dialektische Kraft*] opposed to this abstract universality, in other words, through their own particular nature or through their Concept.<sup>27</sup>

On the one hand, what Hegel is saying here is relatively straightforward: the production of determinate concepts brings with it the threat of cognitive unilateralism (one-sidedness, *Einseitigkeit*). This is clear in the case of determinate concepts with concrete content, such as man, the state, prime number, animal, vegetable, mineral, or what have you.<sup>28</sup> Such concepts do not make explicit the self-related negativity that makes them possible, largely because *what* they specify is usually more important than *how* they specify. That *something* is a state, or a vegetable, or a prime number is a specific determination that points us in the direction of content. What we have in these concepts are determinate principles of difference, not *the* principle of differential negative unity as such. Now, the same is true of higher level concepts such as substance, category, or the synthetic unity of apperception, in that they too are still too determinate or, in other words,

are not *themselves* the principle of differential negative unity; they are rather interpretations of it. The task of the Subjective Logic is therefore to reveal the essential structure of the absolute Concept, liberated from its manifold determinations. Should we *fail* to cognize the essential structure of the Concept, should we become too embroiled in determinateness, well then it is not determination (the work of the understanding) that is to blame but rather the blinkered subject who cannot see its determinations as moments of *reason*. If too much emphasis is put on determination, the understanding seems to become unhinged from reason and our concepts appear 'irrational' (*vernunftlos*), as Hegel puts it: 'When a concept is regarded as irrational [i.e. when the understanding is seen as separate from reason], this must rather be seen as an incapacity [*Unfähigkeit*] of reason to recognize itself in the [determinate] concept.'<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, if the gist of what Hegel says here is clear enough, the definition and the logical status of this subjective powerlessness or incapacity of reason remains somewhat mysterious. If it were just a matter of contingent personal oversight, for example, then its logical status would be nil. (Say, if Kant had simply *forgotten* to clarify his concept of synthesis.) But perhaps the subjective powerlessness Hegel has in mind is rather linked to the idiosyncrasies of particular interpretive or philosophical approaches, such as the quite possibly obstructive role of faculty psychology in the Kantian system. Yet again, in this case, there is nothing *necessary* about the obstructive idiosyncrasies of a particular approach: holding to Hegel's claim about the irresistible power of dialectical development, nothing in principle should have prevented Kant from laying bare the concept of the Concept *in spite of* whatever might have disadvantaged him from doing so. If *in fact* Kant didn't make the move to the higher standpoint, one might say, this could only be construed as accidental and a shortcoming of *Kant's*. We might conclude from these explanations, then, that subjective powerlessness is utterly contingent and has no logical status whatsoever, which would explain why Hegel doesn't go into any more detail about what he means by the expression in the *Logic*. But there is, I think, some justification for claiming that the subjective powerlessness of reason is or rather should be a *necessary* moment of the Subjective Logic, just as determinateness is essential to reason; and in fact this is what Hegel suggests when he writes that 'the determinate and abstract concept is the *condition*, or rather an *essential moment of reason*.'<sup>30</sup> Why then doesn't failure play a more central role in the Subjective Logic?

One reason why subjective powerlessness doesn't play a more important role in the *Logic* is that it is a concept that is much more at home in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the myriad self-deceptions of consciousness are treated systematically. In the *Phenomenology*, powerlessness could easily be tied to forgetting, for example: 'Natural consciousness,' says Hegel in the chapter on sense-certainty, 'is always ... learning from experience what is



true in it; but equally it is always forgetting it and starting the movement all over again.<sup>31</sup> It could also be linked to the stubbornness (*Eigensinn*) of servitude or of Antigone in the eyes of Creon; in both cases 'stubbornness is the freedom which fixes itself on some individuality.'<sup>32</sup> We could also add representational thinking to the list. But forgetting, stubbornness, and representational thinking are all species of the same genus; they are all forms of one-sidedness or – what amounts to the same thing for Hegel – abstraction. And who thinks abstractly, for Hegel? 'The uneducated [*der ungebildete Mensch*], not the educated.'<sup>33</sup> It is immature, individual consciousness that is one-sided and exhibits powerlessness.

Time and again, Hegel gives this same answer to the questions of failure and inadequation: 'The single individual is incomplete Spirit,' he says in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, 'a concrete shape in whose existence *one* determinateness predominates.'<sup>34</sup> Yet it is difficult to see how abstract one-sidedness can be straightforwardly written off as the specific quality of the uneducated individual or of an ill-informed natural consciousness; it simply cannot be due to the contingent immaturity of thought entrenched in particularities or the stubbornness of the individual clinging to some defective opinion. For one thing, it is difficult to imagine thought or experience *without* one-sidedness; for another, Hegel must be saying something more than 'concepts don't kill people, people kill people.' One-sidedness and abstraction are certainly ways in which individual consciousness misrecognizes itself, but they themselves must depend on a more general possibility of reason, *without which* thought and experience would be impossible. In other words, if such mistakes and misrecognitions are themselves only possible on the basis of a necessary moment of rational thought, then not only can we not blame the understanding for cognitive unilateralism, we cannot really blame the uneducated individual either. Powerlessness is not merely *subjective*, after all, but the subjective powerlessness *of reason*. Therefore, Hegel's usual emphasis on the one-sidedness of individual consciousness is somewhat heavy-handed, since it has to be reason itself that structures one-sidedness, just as it structures the whole.

But how can reason be to blame? How can it be powerless if it is at the same time absolute power? In order to answer this question, we need to contextualize the contingency of stubbornness, forgetting, immaturity, and so on, in order to bring out how these seemingly subjective moments of abstraction can only be fully explained by leading them back to the necessity of the Concept. This isn't quite the same as showing that defective individual cognition can be dialectically developed and corrected – something that the *Phenomenology* demonstrates directly. Rather, it is more like saying that the structure of thought is what makes error possible, not individual idiosyncrasies of personality or method, nor human finitude, nor accidental oversights, nor absent-mindedness, nor neglect, nor even ideology as it is commonly understood.

One thing that needs to be stated clearly is that Hegel himself does acknowledge, from time to time, that it is thought itself that is to blame for one-sidedness: 'It is thinking that both inflicts the wound and heals it again,'<sup>35</sup> as he puts it in the *Encyclopædia Logic*. But the emphasis is always on reconciliation or on the claim that spirit 'must [soll] return through its own agency to union with itself,'<sup>36</sup> by transcending the limited standpoint of individual consciousness. But what we ought rather to say with regard to this claim is that the emphasis on the logically optimistic movement of the Concept towards reconciliation (and so away from the contingent defects of individual consciousness) is itself one-sided – and that in order to avoid putting the blame for one-sidedness in the wrong place, either we need to interpret Hegel's concepts of reconciliation and absolute power more subtly, or we need to challenge his tendency to blame individual consciousness for the woes of the Concept. A little of each might not be a bad thing.

So: how is it that reason is to blame for one-sidedness? Quite simply, determinateness as the facet of the Concept that mediates difference is itself the logical model for the abstract fixity of individual consciousness. In passing over from pure universality to sublated diversity, determination moves the subject away from the whole. No determinate concept is itself *the* Concept, at least not explicitly, and whatever content it has is a distraction from pure mediation. (This holds for all determinate concepts, of course, even those of the *Science of Logic*.) But naturally, this move away from the whole is a necessary dimension of the Concept. And so Hegel will say that the absolute, like any determinate concept, 'contains a *becoming-other* [*ein Anderswerden*] that has to be taken back.'<sup>37</sup> Another way to put this, remaining with Hegel's own characterizations of the Concept, is to say that the subject (not the individual but the subject in general) is 'pure, *simple negativity*, and is for this reason the bifurcation [*Entzweyung*] of the simple; it is the doubling [*Verdopplung*] which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of [simple unity].'<sup>38</sup>

It would seem, then, that Hegel himself ultimately provides the best way to understand how reason is to blame for one-sided abstraction: the Concept (qua subject) is a process of self-doubling or becoming-other whereby difference is encountered and mastered in the discursive unity to which it is yoked. But this doubling is precisely what opens up the possibility of abstraction in the first place; the dispersal into difference whereby the subject says 's is p' is the act whereby it gives in to determinateness: to determine is to abstract away from other possible determinations. The absolute power of reason is thereby a *healing* power that is always able to respond to the fact that the Concept is also a *wounding* power insofar as conceptual determination opens the way to abstractive fixity. What gives the healing priority over the wounding is the fact that the pure logical Concept as the principle of negative unity cannot be controverted: wherever

there is difference, disharmony, or unreconciled otherness, the Concept empowers the subject to correct itself by redeploying the very principle that engendered disharmony in the first place. The Concept is enabling, empowering, in this sense: it guarantees that *in principle*, if not *in fact*, differences can always be negated.

But here's the twist: obviously, in the context of a subjective logic, the opposition of 'in principle' and 'in fact' cannot stand, which is why Hegel tries to present the development of the Concept in its absolute character, independently of the subjective, individual understanding. The 'in fact' that characterizes subjective unilateralism – or in other words, the fact that even though we can overcome abstraction, it often happens that we don't – this 'in fact' is also an *a priori* principle in the form of the determinateness that results from the Concept's self-articulation into the species of universal and particular. So *in principle*, the Concept understood as the absolute Concept is absolute power, but equally, *in principle*, the Concept understood as the determinate Concept is the source of cognitive unilateralism. Abstraction is part of the logical structure of the Concept.

Therefore, when Hegel blames individual consciousness for its one-sidedness, he must also be blaming the Concept itself, implicitly, though this point is less frequently made and can give rise to misunderstandings. The conclusion we should draw from this, I think, is that while real cognitive unilateralism is subjective and contingent (and corrigible), the *threat* of unilateralism is not; it is an inevitable and necessary dimension of the Concept that corresponds to determinateness. Should we accept the fact that Hegel mostly deals with the failures of spirit in the context of the *Phenomenology*, then? Or should we rather expect it to be the task of a subjective logic to articulate the link tying the logical subject to the formal possibility of one-sidedness? Why is there no logic of failure in the *Science of Logic*? Hegel deals with this in his way, of course, by insisting on the healing power of the Concept. But the logical optimism of the absolute power of the Concept has always to be weighed against its counterpart, the inevitability of the logical and real resurgence of cognitive unilateralism; and the price of emphasizing this logical optimism in the final pages of the *Logic* may very well be a unilateralism that absolute power will have perpetually to remedy. The expression 'the subjective powerlessness of reason' may therefore be taken as a salutary reminder that reason, understood as power or dialectical potential, is never done its work. Naturally, this doesn't mean that reason is an infinite task. It just means that reason has no *other* task, no *other* aim than that of correcting one-sidedness – an aim that is realized in even the most trivial forms of reconciliation. Power means that such self-correction is always possible. Powerlessness, on the other hand, means that it is always necessary, just because determinateness and one-sidedness go hand in hand.

## Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 826 (A.V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*]; G.W.F. Hegel, 12 *Gesammelte Werke* 238 (1981) [hereinafter cited as *GW*].
2. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 826; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 238.
3. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 826; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 238.
4. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 606; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 638.
5. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 606; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 638.
6. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 607; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 639.
7. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* § 250 Remark, at 23 (A.V. Miller trans. 1970) [hereinafter cited as *PN*]; G.W.F. Hegel, 9 *Werke*, §250, at 35 (1970) [hereinafter cited as *W*].
8. Hegel mentions various 'monstrosities, deformities, intermediate products, etc.' *PN*, *supra* note 7, at § 250, at 24; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at § 250, at 36.
9. *PN*, *supra* note 7, at § 370 Zusatz, at 423; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, § 368 Zusatz, at 510.
10. *PN*, *supra* note 7, at § 376 Zusatz, at 444; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at § 376 Zusatz, at 538.
11. *PN*, *supra* note 7, at § 376 Zusatz, at 44; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at § 376 Zusatz, at 538.
12. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 577; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 511.
13. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 586; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 520.
14. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 586; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 520.
15. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 556; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 395.
16. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 557; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 396.
17. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 578; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 512.
18. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 581; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 515.
19. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 557; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 396.
20. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 580; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 514.
21. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 580; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 514.
22. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 583; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 517.
23. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 583; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 517.
24. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 589; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 522.
25. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 589; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 222.
26. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 142 (A.V. Miller trans., 1977) [hereinafter cited as *PS*]; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 135.
27. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 611; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 642.
28. Cf. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 610; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 641.
29. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 612; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 642–3 (translation modified).
30. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 612; 12 *GW*, *supra* note 1, at 642–3.
31. *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 64; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 68–9.
32. *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 121; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 117–18; see also *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 280; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 252.
33. G.W.F. Hegel, 'Who Thinks Abstractly?,' in *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* 116 (Walter Kaufmann trans. 1965); 2 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 577.
34. *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 16; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 24.
35. G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, with the *Zusätze* 62 (T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, & H.S. Harris 1991) [hereinafter cited as *EL*]; 8 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 62. On this theme, see Iain Macdonald, 'The Wounder Will Heal': Cognition and Reconciliation in Hegel and Adorno,' in 44 *Philosophy Today* 132–9 (2000).

- 36. *EL*, *supra* note 35, at 61–2; 8 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 88.
- 37. *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 11; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 19.
- 38. *PS*, *supra* note 27, at 11; 9 *W*, *supra* note 7, at 19.

# 7

## Ways of Being Singular: The Logic of Individuality

Robert Berman\*

### Introduction

Ordinary thought has always operated with four distinct conceptions of individuality. The first, a minimal conception, which is ingredient in all the others, is the notion of an individual as merely the countable referent of a singular term, more precisely of a proper name. In this minimal sense of individuality, an individual is whatever is one, or single and namable, as a target for speech and thought. Thus, on the minimal conception, individuality pertains to virtually anything to which singular reference can be made. The three additional ideas of individuality presuppose, but go beyond, this minimal conception. Individuality as exclusivity is the idea of the sole or exclusive one – one of a kind. The God of monotheism is a paradigm of this conception of individuality. Individuality as virtuosity is that of a one singled out because it is the best of the bunch, the virtuoso. Finally, individuality as novelty is the idea of a one that, due to its uniqueness, escapes virtually all classification, for it is like nothing else. It is so radically different that it is literally *sui generis* and, for that reason, in a class by itself. An exemplary case of individuality embodying virtuosity and novelty is suggested by Hegel's understanding of Socrates' singularity as the philosopher of world-historical significance.

While many thinkers have talked about individuality in one or another of these ways, only Hegel offers an account of the logic of individuality that provides what is conceptually needed to reconstruct the pre-theoretical four-fold distinction in a systematic way. The point of this chapter is to offer a set-theoretical interpretation of Hegel's systematic logical account of individuality and, in doing so, to suggest how to understand the systematic basis for the pre-theoretical conception of individuality.<sup>1</sup>

As is well-known, Hegel's account of individuality in the *Science of Logic* ('*Logic*') is introduced early on in the subjective part of his logic; more specifically, it is the culminating phase of his account of the concept, which

yields the unique tripartite logical division of the concept into universality, particularity, and individuality.<sup>2</sup> I will refer to this tripartite division from now on as the *Distinction*, and my strategy will be to approach the topic of individuality by way of a set-theoretical interpretation of the *Distinction*.

While the article's limited purpose will not permit exploration beyond this narrow field, pursuing this aim leaves unexamined a set of underlying assumptions about systematic philosophy, the nature of logic, and its function as a part of that systemic whole. Because these assumptions serve as a kind of outer frame for the ensuing discussion and thus will inevitably make themselves felt throughout, they should be exposed at the outset. In particular the following interlinked claims deserve special mention:

1. Philosophy on the systematic view is a kind of knowledge. It achieves its knowledge in part through a reconstructive enterprise. It takes the pre-theoretical givens of intuition and representation and re-thinks them, conceptualizing those given contents by distilling their logical core and assigning them their rightful place in a system of knowledge.
2. Because the reconstructive enterprise depends on independent access to that logical core, which comes through logic, the latter provides philosophy with its epistemology. Logic takes the form of a self-justifying, topic-neutral discourse, developing a regionally unrestricted theory of categories. It develops these interrelated categories from an original indeterminacy and, beholden only to strictures of immanence, culminates in the grounding logical idea, which, as the fully realized structure of self-determination, provides the privileged vehicle of philosophical knowledge.
3. This means that philosophy is primarily knowledge of ideas, where ideas are correspondence relations between concepts and their objective realizations. While ideas are identities of concept and object, concepts are to be conceived in terms of the *Distinction* and, when fully determined, as individuals. It follows that philosophical knowledge is structured and guided by knowledge of the *Distinction*, and thus ultimately by subject matter having the character of individuality.
4. The treatment of the *Distinction*, and with it the logic of individuality in the subjective logic, emerges from the upshot of the objective logics of the categories of being and essence. The systematic logical conception of the individual is the earliest adumbration of the logical idea. The individual, in the language of the systematic logical account, is unity of universality and particularity, the unity of self-relation and determinacy, the unity of identity and difference, the determinate determinate. The individual is the particular in which the universal posits itself as itself.<sup>3</sup> These formulations commit Hegel to a dynamic interrelation among the components of the *Distinction*. To begin with, the universal implies the

particular, for it is the unity of identity and determinacy. As determinate, the universal requires relation to an other; hence, it particularizes itself. This implies, in turn, the difference between universal and particular. Yet, because in the end the concept is universal and therefore self-identical, there is not and cannot be a genuinely ultimate other. All conceptual relations are, at the end of the day, self-relations. Thus, the particularity of the concept as the determinacy of the universal, which in its determinacy implies relation to an other, must be at one with the universal, since universality is identity, or self-relation. Finally, the particular, as united with the universal, is the individual. The universal, in being determinate and hence particular, but nonetheless at one with itself – *bei sich* – is the individual. To be *bei sich* is to be free; thus, the logic played out in terms of the Distinction is the logic of freedom.

Before proceeding further, a terminological point should be made. Hegel himself uses several different expressions, for example, '*Einzelheit*,' '*das Einzelne*,' and '*einzel*,' '*Individualität*,' and '*Individuum*,' all of which can with justification be translated into English using either the term 'individual' (as noun or adjective) or 'individuality.' But since the English 'individuality' and 'individual' literally translate into '*Individualität*' and '*Individuum*,' respectively, there is a case to be made for choosing to translate '*Einzelheit*,' '*das Einzelne*,' and '*einzel*,' using a different English expression, namely, 'singularity,' 'the singular,' and 'single' or 'singular,' respectively. Not only would this reproduce the linguistic difference in the original, but to do so would capture the presence in '*Einzelheit*' of the numerical term '*eins*' or one (i.e. a single countable item). As will emerge in the sequel, there are other connotations of the English term 'singular' that resonate in the logical discussion of individuality. Nevertheless, although one might try to argue on the basis of this linguistic evidence that Hegel actually intends his use of the distinct German terms to mark a systematic conceptual distinction, no attempt has been made here to argue this point. Instead, the terms 'singular' and 'singularity' will simply be used more or less interchangeably with 'individual' and 'individuality.'

The discussion that follows will proceed in two steps. The first part contains the set-theoretical interpretation of the systematic logical account of the Distinction, specifically the conception of individuality. Two major claims are at issue: (1) there are initially three possible set-theoretical interpretations of the Distinction and thus of individuality, and (2) only one of them best fits or corresponds to the systematic logical account of the Distinction. After arguing for the favored set-theoretical interpretation of the systematic logical account of the Distinction and individuality the second part of the chapter will consider three significant objections and offer replies in defense of the claims of the first Part.



## The set-theoretical interpretation of individuality

### Three models of the distinction

Consider the following three sets of examples. Each contain five claims, all familiar enough, the first inspired by Plato, the second and third by Aristotle, and the last two taken from Hegel. Each of these sets of examples provides a different set-theoretical model for understanding the systematic logical account of the Distinction.

#### *The virtuosity model*

1. There are many kinds of cities; however, that city alone is really just whose every essential characteristic reflects the principle of justice. The single city that is ideal is the one that is most real. It is, in this sense, the true city.<sup>4</sup>
2. There are diverse kinds of friendship: friendship based on pleasure, utility, and virtue. However, virtue friendship, or the friendship of the good, is the unique or singular form of friendship, for it alone fully realizes the principle of friendship. It best instantiates what friendship really is because it embodies the requirements specified by the concept of friendship. Friendship among the virtuous is the truth of friendship.<sup>5</sup>
3. There may be a variety of ways of living well; however, there is only one way of life – the life of contemplation – that counts as the primary or outstanding form of living well or happiness. The life of contemplation alone among the distinct ways of life, most perfectly corresponds to the criterion (or criteria) given by the concept of happiness as the actualization of soul in accordance with virtue. The contemplative life is the truth of human happiness.<sup>6</sup>
4. There are many religions; yet, Christianity alone among this plurality conforms perfectly to the concept of religion and is, for that reason, the singular religion among the many (i.e. the religion of individuality). Christianity is the truth of religion.
5. There is a plurality of kinds of ethical community; nevertheless, the state is that singular kind of ethical community that stands normatively at the apex of the range of ethical community, since only the state completely embodies what it is to be an ethical community. The state is the truth of ethical life.

Generalizing from these examples: given a principle, norm or standard specifying the criteria of adequacy (call it the essence, genus, or universal concept) and a plurality of species or kinds (call those particulars) that particular kind that, alone among the kinds (i.e. solely, uniquely, or singularly) meets all the criteria, and hence fully realizes the principle, is the outstanding or superlative member of the set of particulars – the individual. This model gives expression to the pre-theoretical conception of individuality as virtuosity.

*The inclusivist model*

1. There are many kinds of cities. Some are just, some are not. There is even a city that is perfectly just. Yet, despite these normative differences, they are all cities.
2. There are diverse kinds of friendship: friendship based on pleasure, utility, and virtue. And while the friendship of virtue may be the best form, all these relationships, despite their differences, are instances of friendship.
3. Even if there is one way of life – namely, the life of contemplation – that is the primary or outstanding way of life, and hence the truly happy life, there are other ways of life that share the same features of living well and that is all that counts to regard them as members of the same set.
4. There are many religions; while Christianity may have, alone among this plurality, the singular pride of place, the others are no less religions for all that.
5. There is a plurality of kinds of ethical community; although the state is the unique or singular form of ethical community standing normatively at the apex of the range of ethical life, the other types are just as much ethical communities.

Generalizing: Given a shared or common class characteristic functioning as a criterion for class inclusion, members of the class include whatever possesses the defining class characteristic. Any normative or other difference among members is irrelevant. The universal serving as class characteristic abstracts from all such differences. This model gives expression to the pre-theoretical minimal conception of individuality.

*The exclusivist model*

1. There are not many kinds of cities. There are not even many cities. One might call them cities, but to do so is, at best, to speak loosely. Just as only the doctor who makes no mistakes is a doctor, so only the city that fully realizes what it is to be a city is a city.<sup>7</sup>
2. There are not diverse kinds of friendship. Relationships defined by pleasure or utility do not satisfy the criteria for genuine friendship. Only the friendship of virtue is friendship.
3. There is not a variety of ways of living well; there is but a single way to live well – namely, the life of contemplation – the only truly happy life.
4. There are not many religions; Christianity is the sole religion. Others that purport to be religions are not really religions at all, except perhaps in name.
5. There is no plurality of kinds of ethical community; rather, the state is the unique or singular form of ethical community. There is no range of ethical community at whose apex the state stands as the outstanding exemplar. It is the sole member, in a class by itself, a class excluding all but this single one.

Generalizing: Given a universal serving as class characteristic that incorporates full realization, or perfect correspondence, as part of the adequacy criterion for class inclusion, class membership is restricted solely to whatever satisfies the normatively rich requirements given by the criterion. Consequently, there can be no imperfect or defective class members. This model bespeaks aspects of both the exclusivist and virtuosic concepts of individuality of ordinary thought.

### Three questions and answers

The virtuousity, inclusivist, and exclusivist models invite three questions about their plausibility, applicability to Hegel's systematic logical account, and comparative theoretical adequacy.

#### *Plausible account of the distinction?*

First, do the three sets of claims provide equally plausible ways of modeling the Distinction? Does each qualify as a distinct way of construing the conceptual unity of universality, particularity, and individuality? Here, I think the answer has to be no.

To begin with, the inclusivist model displays a conception of what Hegel would call *abstract universality*, which is abstract in two distinct ways.<sup>8</sup> First, it abstracts from the differences that individuate the members of the set from one another, without which there can be no plurality, no members, and consequently, no particularity at all. (Indeed, without such individuation, there could be no distinction between the universal and the particular either.) Second, the universal abstracts more specifically from any normative differences among the members. This conception of the Distinction countenances no normative range; no member has the character of being higher or lower, or more or less, than other members relative to the universal as class characteristic. Particularity, for its part, is simply the character of the otherwise undifferentiated class member, while individuality consists in being a differentiated one among the many same – this rather than that. Each member is a particular individual. What guarantees the singularity of the individual member as yet another differentiated member of the same is some unique determining factor or other. It could be, for example, a new qualitative wrinkle, or simply an ordinal numerical assignment. Thus, the inclusivist model, which expresses the pre-theoretical, minimal conception of individuality, seems to pass muster as a plausible interpretation of the Distinction.

The exclusivist model suggests a different and questionable way of construing the Distinction. The universal, while serving as the unifying characteristic, incorporates an explicitly normative criterion. Thus, it is not an abstract universal; it is not comprehensive or inclusive of all particulars regardless of their normative differences. On the contrary, it specifies for inclusion as members precisely, and exclusively, only those that perfectly

correspond to or realize the normative criterion encoded in the universal. This is why only the perfect realizations—and that means only individuals—are particulars. This implies, however, to the detriment of this model, that particularity is not distinguishable from individuality. There is no place for the conception of a non-individual particular. Again, this is due to the absence of a normatively neutral, and hence abstracting, dimension of universality, that would permit class membership to normatively deficient members, and thus, to a normative range of more or less adequate correspondence. The exclusivist model collapses the Distinction into a dualistic contrast between a universal and normatively adequate particular, or, individuality. This model is defective precisely because it affords no place for the normatively neutral character of, normatively speaking, defective particularity. This reductive tendency of the exclusivist model bespeaks the ordinary understanding of individuality in exclusivist and virtuosic terms without being sufficiently able to accommodate it.

This brings us to the virtuosity model. The universal of the inclusivist model, as we saw, is doubly abstract in that, for purposes of determining class membership, it brackets as irrelevant both a whole range of determinate differences among particular individuals and the specifically normative differences among them. The latter occurs because the universal does not include normativity as part of its adequacy criteria. In contrast, the universal of the virtuosity model, like that of the exclusivist model, incorporates a normative criterion; it matters for membership whether or not a member more or less realizes the concept. Unlike the exclusivist model, however, and like the inclusivist, the universal of the virtuosity model is comprehensive in that it does not exclude imperfect members. In doing so, it retains all the components of the Distinction. All members, including imperfect ones, are, as members, strictly speaking, simply particulars, while only the particular that fully realizes the normatively encoded class characteristic is an individual. Thus, while the inclusivist model distinguishes particulars by still maintaining for them the abstraction from the normative demand for perfect realization, only the universality peculiar to the virtuosity model incorporates both a normatively neutral, i.e. comprehensive and a precise normatively valenced criterion. Particulars are members that meet the comprehensive or inclusive criterion, while the status of individuality is reserved for that member (i.e. that particular that also fulfills the additional normative criterion). The lousy or mediocre pianist is still a particular pianist, but only the virtuoso is an individual – a singular player. By uniting the inclusivist model's abstract universality and the exclusivist model's normativity, the virtuosity model provides the basis for reconstructing both the minimal conception and the virtuosic conception of individuality, and possibly the exclusivist and novelty conceptions, as well.

To conclude the discussion of this first question, only the virtuosity model and the inclusivist model are plausible interpretations of the Distinction.

*Illustrative of Hegel's account?*

The second question asks whether these models illustrate three different ways of being singular that emerge in Hegel's systematic logical account of individuality. A definitive answer would depend upon a complete interpretation of the text, but a provisional answer, based on some textual evidence, is qualifiedly negative. For while Hegel does distinguish between two conceptions of the Distinction in the course of his account of universality, particularity, and individuality, he does not – as far as I can tell – offer a conception corresponding to the third. One clearly finds in Hegel's systematic logical account both the conception of the *one* or *this*<sup>9</sup> – the differentiated particular whose minimal singularity is sufficient for individuation (the inclusivist model) – as well as the unique, virtuosic individual whose claim to singularity is that only it, and it alone, perfectly realizes the notion (the virtuosity model).<sup>10</sup> But the systematic logical account does not seem to present a conception of exclusive membership, reserved for the perfectly realizing individual alone (the exclusivist model). This is a satisfying result, though, since it not only lends some support for the claim that at least two of the set theoretical models, the virtuosity and inclusivist, present plausible interpretations of Hegel's systematic logical account, but also because the rejection of the exclusivist model, already ruled out on independent grounds, is further corroborated by its absence from Hegel's own treatment. One might try to counter that Hegel's systematic logical account does, by implication, make a place for the exclusivist conception of individuality to the extent that this conception signs on to the virtuosity conception of normatively rich individuality. However, this is neither sufficient to rehabilitate the exclusivist model as a plausible rendering of the Distinction, nor to buttress the claim that this model is mirrored in Hegel's text. In the text, there seems to be no evidence for the exclusion of the imperfect but nevertheless bona fide particular – the particular which, precisely due to its imperfect realization, can have no standing as a particular at all, according to the exclusivist model.

*Does any model stand out?*

Finally, of the two models – inclusivist and virtuosity – that do turn out to provide plausible interpretations of the Distinction and of individuality, does either one stand out because it best captures the Distinction, and with it individuality as Hegel intended it to be understood? Can any one of the members of the class of minimally plausible models of the Distinction count as the favored interpretation of Hegel's systematic logical account of Distinction, and so too of individuality? If so, this model alone will illustrate the conception of individuality that, by uniting universality and particularity in the right way, first adumbrates the conception of the logical idea, which is to serve as the privileged vehicle of philosophical knowledge. To this third question the answer seems to be yes.

While Hegel's text provides evidence for the presence of the virtuosity and inclusivist conceptions of the Distinction, it is quite clear that the systematic logical account must, for logical reasons, endorse the virtuosity conception of the Distinction. For the systematic logical account rejects as inadequate, for purposes of attaining philosophical knowledge, the conception of abstract universality and, therefore, the correlative conceptions of particularity and individuality.<sup>11</sup> Philosophical knowledge requires the account of universality that allows for a range of particulars, a comprehensive universality. Philosophical knowledge also demands the incorporation of the normative criterion that makes it possible to single out, for genuine individuality only, members of the set that perfectly realize the normative criterion given with the concept. This systematic conception (i.e. the virtuosity model's conception of individuality) is needed if the logical idea, the correspondence or adequation of the concept and its objective realization, is going to provide the privileged vehicle for philosophical knowledge, the knowledge, as Hegel would probably phrase it, of individuality as concrete universality.

## Objections and replies

The twofold conclusion of the first part – the claim that Hegel's account of the Distinction and of individuality can be interpreted on the set-theoretical models of virtuosity and inclusivity, but that virtuosity is the favored interpretation – raises a host of suspicions that can quickly congeal into forceful objections. I consider three difficulties the set-theoretical account of the Distinction has to face and suggest, in brief, some plausible lines of response for each.

### Classes and sets

One obvious objection holds that the entire account offered here is fatally flawed because it conceptualizes the Distinction, and individuality in particular, in terms of classes or sets. The set-theoretical interpretation, according to this double-barreled objection, distorts or denatures the subject matter, and in any case it is not Hegel's way of doing it. This objection, if sufficiently telling, would undermine the whole basis of the proposed account of the Distinction.

A couple of points should be made in reply. First, the text of Hegel's *Logic* actually helps to authorize the set-theoretical conceptualization of the Distinction. Hegel himself speaks of genus and species, a set or class relation. Admittedly, in one context, he does so somewhat pejoratively in the case of natural species not deducible from the genus, and of the highest genus that abstracts from, rather than including, its species. But he speaks of genus and species favorably in another context, claiming that universality and particularity are both immanently derived species of their genus.

(Later he adds individuality to the list.) The genus speciates, as it were, into the components of the Distinction.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, his discussion of judgment, which immediately follows his account of the Distinction, deals with subsumption – the formation of subsets – and inherence or instantiation – the establishing of class membership. This approach is reinforced by the examples taken from Hegel's *Realphilosophie*, the philosophy of right and religion, which show that a systematic Realphilosophie operates with the Distinction in arguing for knowledge claims about the idea of right or religion. While there might be reasons for ultimately rejecting a formulation of the Distinction in set-theoretical terms, both Hegel's texts and the kind of philosophical knowledge envisioned through the application of the Distinction bespeak its plausibility.

### **Dialectical development**

Another objection, which one could view as a continuation or deepening of the first, is that the set-theoretical interpretation of the Distinction, and thus of individuality, omits the dynamic, dialectical development of the systematic logical treatment. The articulation of three set-theoretical interpretative models of the Distinction leaves out the crucial fact that particularity and individuality, according to Hegel's systematic logical treatment, are derived immanently as implications of the conception of the concept, and more specifically from universality in general as conceived within the confines of the systematic logical account. Only the latter type of approach can do justice to the following set of interrelated systematic claims. The concept is the unity of identity or self-relation and determinacy, which implies that the concept has the minimal character of universality in general. This in turn, by involving determinacy, implies the particularity of the concept. Finally, the derivation of the individual points both to the concept remaining identical with itself in its determinacy – the structure of freedom over against necessity – and at the same time to the loss of the concept and the derivation of the new topic of judgment. This tight-knit, systematic, logical development is lost, according to this objection, if one adopts the set-theoretical interpretation, because the angle of approach is too external and misses altogether the immanence of the dialectical logic.

This objection would be lethal if the set-theoretical interpretation of the Distinction were inconsistent with the systematic logical account briefly outlined above. Fortunately, however, it is not. On the contrary, the virtuosity conception of the Distinction is not merely consistent with the systematic logical account. In fact, the virtuosity conception captures the overarching systematic logical claim about the concept as the self-determining unity of identity or self-relation and determinacy from a set-theoretical perspective, which, as already argued, is not alien to the systematic logical account. For the claim, resting especially on the set-theoretical virtuosity conception of the Distinction and of individuality, is

in effect that the universal first establishes its self-relation as a relation of identity through its concretization in the individual. That is what gives the individual its singular normative status as the full realization of the concept.

### Exclusivity and novelty

The last objection to be considered comes from another direction and targets the systematic logical account directly, rather than through its set-theoretical interpretation. By contrast with the first two objections, this objection simply grants both the acceptability of the set-theoretical conceptualization of the Distinction and the accompanying claim that the virtuosity model adequately articulates the systematic logical account of the singularity of the individual. In fact, the complaint even praises that interpretation for clarifying the systematic logical account. But the compliment is backhanded; for by making the systematic logical account as clear as it does, it only magnifies its flaws. The real defect hobbling the systematic logical account of the logic of individuality, according to this new complaint, lies in its failure to account for the exclusivist and novelty conceptions of individuality or singularity ingredient in ordinary thought. This objection amounts to more than a charge of incompleteness. The difficulty for the systematic logical account is not simply the sin of omission. The charge is not just that it has left out these additional types of individuality, but that the systematic logical account cannot countenance them at all. The systematic logical account is being accused of making the claim, in effect, that it has exhausted the forms of individuality – a claim that, in the light of the evidence, the account has no right to make.

The exclusivist conception of individuality, which according to this objection has no place in the systematic logical account, has as its paradigm instance the God of monotheism. This paradigm conveys the idea of something that is the only one of its kind. More importantly, however, it is not contingently, but necessarily, the sole or exclusive member of its class – there can be no other member of the kind. The class necessarily consists of exactly a single member and this constitutes its unique singularity.

If the exclusivist conception of individuality is that of the singleton (i.e. that of an essentially sole class member), the novelty conception of individuality is that of a singularity so unique that it can be a member of no class. This case cuts deeper as an objection to the systematic logical account because of its implicit claim that the account fails to recognize as the core conception of individuality what we can call, borrowing the cosmologist's locution, *naked singularity*. The naked singular is so radically unique that it escapes any possible classification altogether. It is alien to any conceptualization. So conceived, the idea of naked singularity undermines the assumption that makes plausible the set-theoretical interpretation of the systematic logical account, namely, that individuality can be understood in



terms of relations involving class and membership. If what best captures the nature of individuality is naked singularity, and the latter's singularity consists of its resistance to identification with any universal underwriting classification, then the systematic logical account and its set-theoretical interpretation suffer from a fundamental disorientation. In this light, the systematic logical conception of the individual as the determinate determinate bears, at best, a pale resemblance to true singularity.<sup>13</sup> For the latter is precisely not the idea of what unites with itself in its determinacy or fully realizes its concept; rather it is the idea of what is radically other than, and hence recalcitrant, to all such conceptual identification. What is radically individual is utterly novel, unique, and unprecedented – not in any way of a kind – for the naked singularity is like nothing with which it could share universality. It is not even clear that the naked singularity can have a name, even if a name is pure tag without meaning. To the extent that the individual stands essentially in relation to the universality of the concept, as it must according to the systematic logical account and its set-theoretical interpretation, this last objection is that the individual is not truly individual after all.

The systematic logical account of individuality, on its set-theoretical interpretation, should have no trouble finding a place for the exclusivist conception of individuality. Further, the *necessarily* exclusive individual might seem to fit the exclusivist conception of individuality previously discussed and rejected. On that model, the sole or singular member would achieve its exclusive status because it alone would satisfy the normative requirement. However, there is no sense in reintroducing the exclusivist model, for normativity is not what gives the necessarily exclusive individual its exclusive status. It can be viewed rather as the limit case of the inclusivist conception of the individual – namely, the differentiated particular class member – which the systematic logical account of individuality does recognize. The necessarily exclusive individual belongs to the class characteristic or universal, as the principle of class inclusion requires that the class shall have but a single member. In this way, the systematic logical account should be able to incorporate into its own logical framework the exclusivist conception of individuality and the special case of the necessarily exclusive individual. To the extent that the God of monotheism serves as the exemplary instance for this conception, it might not only exemplify exclusivism, but also virtuosity – we are all its imperfect likenesses, but somehow, nevertheless, members of the same. In this case, however, the systematic logical account is well-equipped on its set-theoretical virtuosity interpretation to find an appropriate logical space for the conception.

Dealing with the problem of radical or naked singularity requires a different strategy of response. In fact, two related responses are warranted. One might admit that the idea of naked singularity does not, at first glance, fit into the systematic logical account of individuality; but making this concession does not amount to an admission of defeat. For the reason it does

not fit is not that the systematic logical theory is defective. It is because the naked singular is not a conception of individuality at all. Rather, the naked singular is virtually a throwback to the indeterminacy of otherness or being for itself, if not to the indeterminacy of being as such; for this reason the naked singularity is more appropriately relocated as a denizen of the logic of being. For individuality, while it essentially involves negativity, cannot demand an otherness so radical that it opposes in principle any identification with universality whatsoever. The identity with itself that gives individuality its distinctive singularity requires for that very reason its unity with determinacy, which implies its complete susceptibility to conceptualization. A naked singularity, by contrast, must remain other than whatever might otherwise be its determinacy, for to identify with the latter is to fall immediately into a class defined by that determinacy, however unique and novel. Naked singularity, thus conceived by the critic of the systematic logical account, is too indeterminate to be individual. It can barely be a *this* without immediately falling into line as a member of the class of referents of demonstratives. Thus, this way of conceiving of the novelty of the bare or naked individual finds a home in another part of logic, and so in the end will not pose a threat to the completeness claim of the systematic logical account of individuality on its set-theoretical interpretation.

In closing, there is, however, a different response one might make to address the problem of naked singularity. This response is suggested by Hegel's well-known characterization of Socrates' novelty as a world-historical individual.<sup>14</sup> Plato's Alcibiades proclaims that Socrates is such an utterly unique individual that there has never been another like him and there is no human being, real or fictional, to whom he could be compared.<sup>15</sup> But Socrates, for all his radical singularity, was responsible for introducing a new principle into the world. He was a thinker who turned from the study of nature to ethical matters and, in the famous formula, brought philosophy down from the heavens,<sup>16</sup> enacting for the first time the defining universal concept of philosophy as autonomous reason. Socrates is not only, speaking minimally, a single human being and an individual like any other philosopher; he is, beyond that, the singular one who, manifesting his novelty and exclusivity, first individualized the concept of philosophy. Finally, Socrates is the unique one who, more than any other of the same, best exemplifies what it is to be a philosopher and so remains, alone, the virtuoso among us.

## Notes

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1. The modest aim of the set-theoretical approach adopted here is to exploit the ensemble of ordinary notions of set or class, set or class member, and class characteristic in order to reformulate Hegel's systematic logical account of individuality. Adopting a set-theoretical approach, in this sense, does not entail any

commitment to using the conceptual and technical apparatus or the symbolic notation of mathematical set theory.

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 600–1 (A.V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter *Logic*].
3. *Id.* at 618.
4. See Plato, *Republic* 449, bk. 5, l. a, 543–4, bk. 8 (Allan Bloom trans., 2d ed 1991).
5. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 149, bk. 8, ch. 4, ll. 1157a25–b5 (Joe Sachs trans., 1955).
6. See *id.* at 191, bk. 10, ch. 7, ll. 1177a12–b31.
7. See Plato, *supra* note 4, at \*340, bk. 1, l. d–e.
8. *Logic*, *supra* note 2, at 602.
9. *Id.* at 622.
10. *Id.* at 618.
11. *Id.* at 604.
12. *Logic*, *supra* note 2, at 606–8.
13. *Logic*, *supra* note 2, at 618.
14. 1 G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 384 (E. S. Haldane & Frances Simson trans., 1983) (1892).
15. See Plato, *Symposium* 52, ll. 221c–d (Seth Bernardete trans., 2001) (1986).
16. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 14, bk. 1, ch. 6, ll. 987b1–3 (*Joe Sachs trans.*, 1999); Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 435, bk. 5, ch. 4, ll. 10–11 (J.E. King trans., 1971).

# 8

## The Types of Universals and the Forms of Judgment

*Richard Dien Winfield*

The forms of judgment are widely recognized to be central to thinking and to knowing objectivity. Seldom, however, have the necessity, interrelation, and completeness of these forms been investigated. Although Kant can be credited for having brought them to center stage, he is notorious for failing to account for their diversity or for that of the categories he finds rooted in each form. As he himself would have to admit, assurances that judgment is found in certain shapes relating terms through certain concepts will not suffice for any claims holding universally for either thinking or objective knowledge. At best, what is culled from tradition or psychological observation can support corrigible descriptive claims of contingent local application.

To be conceived as such, independently of any conditional empirical content, judgment must not be considered in relation to any specific concepts that happen to be predicated of a subject. Instead, judgment must be examined in respect to the concept in general. Moreover, judgment per se must not predicate the concept in regard to any specific, contingently given subject. Rather, judgment, considered as such, must predicate the concept to the subject as such. To be logically rather than empirically determined, the subject can have no further content than the particular or the individual. These contents are themselves intrinsic to the concept. This is because the concept, logically speaking, is the universal and the universal constitutively involves both the particular and the individual. Without differentiating itself through the particular, the universal cannot have its encompassing identity, whereas by being at one with itself in the particular, the universal engenders the individual, that which owes its differentiation to itself, enabling the particular to be distinguishable from other particulars and the universal to be a one over many.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, judgment will constitutively relate these necessary elements of the concept, of universality, to one another. In determining the subject by the predicate to which it gets connected, judgment will thus determine the concept by its own elements, as related externally to one another through the immediate connection of the

copula. This connection is immediate insofar as judgment relates subject and predicate by nothing but 'is,' a connector providing no ground for its connection. By contrast, syllogism connects its extremes through the mediation of a middle term, which, logically speaking, must again be one of the elements of the concept.

If judgment necessarily takes particular shapes, these will themselves be distinguished by which elements of the concept they connect, as well as by any generic types of universal, particular, and individual that distinguish each type of connection. No other differentiating factors are available without appealing to contingently given contents that have no legitimate place in logical investigation.

Consequently, if any categories are to emerge from the logical treatment of judgment, they will comprise the generic types of universality, particularity and individuality, types whose necessity will reside in how they are ingredient in the different forms of judgment. To have any necessity of their own, these forms of judgment must themselves emerge from judgment *per se*. Otherwise, their differentiation will be rooted not in the nature of judgment, but in extraneous, accidental features.

For this reason, the logical investigation of judgment must begin with the universal determination of judgment, which comprises the minimal specification presupposed by any further forms that may be logically entailed. Although any such forms must emerge from this universal determination, once they do, it becomes differentiated as the initial shape of judgment, distinct from those that follow from it. Then, the universality, particularity and individuality that figure within this initial shape themselves become distinguished as specific types of universals, particulars and individuals, externally related to one another by the type of copula with which judgment logically begins.

Significantly, these types of universals, particulars and individuals can be embodied in different types of reality and thought. Accordingly, any theory that privileges one type to the exclusion of the others will truncate thinking and conceptual knowledge. Such privileging will not only limit reason to a form of universality that is not exhaustive, but limit the application of thought to particular forms of reality, leaving others erroneously beyond rational conception. The forms of judgment thus need to be developed in their totality to liberate reason from the shortsighted truncations that have plagued all too much philosophy, past and present.

Among historical figures, Hegel stands out for attempting to account exhaustively and systematically for the forms of judgment. He purports to develop judgment from no further resource than the concept itself, following out how the universal, particular and individual entail the external unification of universal and individual constitutive of the subject-predicate relation of judgment. He then proceeds to differentiate the forms of judgment by thinking through how the minimal form of judgment transforms

itself into a further form, which entails more successive transformations. These metamorphoses continue until a form is reached that brings closure to the complete series of particular forms of judgment by engendering syllogism, where the unity of terms is mediated by another concept component, rather than being joined through the 'is' of the copula. Hegel seeks to escape arbitrariness and incompleteness by presenting the differentiation of judgment as a self-development that ends up transcending judgment's immediate connection of subject and predicate. All intervention by an external theorist is thereby purportedly avoided. Whether Hegel has succeeded depends, of course, on whether the series he presents does comprise successive self-transformations that lead beyond judgment.

To test Hegel's achievement and, more importantly, explore the forms of universality in their exhaustive diversity, one must examine each form in succession, employing Hegel's account as a guide, wherever possible.

### **Preliminary overview of the forms of judgment and the types of universality**

Complicating the evaluation of Hegel's treatment are the two somewhat incongruous ways in which he divides the territory. On the one hand, he claims that the itinerary of the forms of judgment reflects successive applications of categories of being, essence and the concept to the connection of universal and individual. On the other hand, he offers a four-fold division of judgments into those of quality, reflection, necessity, and the concept. These two listings do map onto one another insofar as judgments of quality involve categories of being, judgments of reflection and necessity both apply categories of essence, and judgments of the concept apply categories from the logic of the concept. Nevertheless, some explanation is required not only for why being, essence and the concept reappear, but for why the intermediate phase breaks into two successive sets of judgment.

Admittedly, the resulting taxonomy is not far removed from other traditional divisions of judgment. Under judgments of quality Hegel offers the positive, negative and infinite judgments, each pertaining to determinate being and involving inherence. Under judgments of reflection, the so-called 'quantitative' judgments, Hegel presents the singular, particular and universal judgments, each involving subsumption, rather than inherence. Under judgments of necessity, Hegel develops the categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive judgments, each containing relations of genus and species. Finally, under judgments of the concept, Hegel gives the assertoric, problematic and apodeictic judgments, each presenting modal relations in which evaluations enter. Kant gives very much the same assortment, albeit in a different order, in his Table of Judgments, placing first, under quantity, the universal, particular and singular judgments, second, under quality, the

affirmative, negative and infinite judgments, third, under relation, the categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive judgments, and fourth, under modality, the problematic, assertoric, and apodeictic judgments.<sup>2</sup> Of itself, this convergence may well testify to mutual confusion as much as mutual enlightenment.

More indicative of the conceptual comprehensiveness of the proposed division is the typology of universals that it contains. The judgments of quality, reflection, necessity, and the concept contain, respectively, the abstract universal, the universal of class membership, the genus, and the universal of normativity, the 'concrete universal.' Each of these types of universal entails a correlative type of individual and particular.

The abstract universal is 'abstract' in that its quality inheres in individuals whose other determinations are entirely indifferent to the universal they share. The individual that possesses the abstract universal is immediate in the sense that nothing else about it is mediated by its universality. For this reason, knowledge of the abstract universal inhering in an immediate individual indicates nothing more about the latter. All other knowledge of the individual must be obtained from other means, such as observation. The abstract universal is privileged by early modern philosophers, who, not surprisingly, appeal to experience to know individuals in recognition of reason's alleged inability to grasp more than abstractions, and conceive reality in atomistic terms, where objects are immediate individuals, otherwise indifferent to how they are connected.

By contrast, the universal of class membership relates its members to one another through ascription of some quality to one, some or all members of a class. Here, individuals' properties are mediated by relation to a group, but group membership still leaves undetermined what other features distinguish members from one another. Consequently, although the individual as class member is not simply immediate, the mediation of class membership leaves unspecified what subgroups may fall within the class, as well as what individuates members. The universal of class membership is privileged by those who restrict general knowledge to 'natural kinds,' which, given the contingency of subgroups and individuation within classes, stand in no *a priori* hierarchy and can only be delimited empirically.

The genus, for its part, does determine the particularity of the individual, mandating specific species as inherent in the differentiation of the genus. Hence, knowledge of the genus entails knowledge of its species, making possible *a priori* judgments about what sub-groupings members of a genus fall under. Nevertheless, although the individuals of the genus have a particularity necessary to the genus, namely, some necessary species being, what individuates them as members of their species is left just as undetermined as the individuality of the immediate individual or class member.<sup>3</sup> The ancients, most notably Plato and Aristotle, privilege this type of universality, which is why they conceive reality in terms of a hierarchy of

forms, whose genus/species relation enables reason to make necessary judgments about the nature of things, independently of observation. Because, however, the genus does not individuate its members when it determines their species, the ancients must leave individuality beyond the grasp of reason, together with those realities in which individuality is penetrated by universality, realities such as beauty and freedom.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, the universal of normativity, or the concrete universal, determines the individual in its entirety through the particular and universal. The individual that is so determined is not the immediate individual, nor merely a member of a class or a genus and species. Normativity requires an exemplary existence in which what is individual is no less universal. This complete union of individuality and universality is basic to self-determination, where the self-determined self, *qua* autonomous, is what it has determined itself to be, giving itself an individual identity that it owes to itself, a self that contains that individuality in its all pervading unity. Although the concrete universal, and its associate freedom, may underlie truth, right and beauty, no other type of universality is more neglected. That it brings closure to the typology of universals is suggested by how it exhausts the conceptual gradations in predication—the universal determines either just the universal (quality or class), or itself and the particular (genus and species), or itself, the particular and the individual (concrete universal).

### **Qualitative judgment and abstract universality**

The minimal determination of judgment, the subject-predicate relation, comprises the starting point for systematically investigating the forms of judgment and the types of universality, particularity, and individuality.<sup>5</sup> Nothing more can enter into the necessary differentiation of judgments and a critical investigation of Hegel's account must begin by examining how the subject-predicate relation can be both basic to all forms of judgment and immediately comprise one such form, qualitative judgment.

Although a proposition may grammatically connect a subject with a predicate in which contingent contents define each term, the logical determination of judgment must be restricted to the immediate identification of the subject *per se* with the predicate *per se*. In this connection, the subject must have a given character in order to be ascribed a predicate. Else, there is nothing determinate to which anything can be predicated. As such, the subject is simply a given individual, without further qualification. Although judgment connects it to a predicate, the subject figures within judgment as something whose individuality is antecedent to the predication the judgment effects. Consequently, the subject is an individual with an immediate character that has, as yet, no relation to the predicate that judgment will assign to it. Whatever predicate judgment connects to the subject will



inhere in the subject as a given substrate of predication, different from, and thereby possessing determination additional to whatever content the predicate possesses. The subject can be conceived to have nothing more specific than this immediate individuality in which the predicate will inhere. Otherwise, content extraneous to the subject–predicate relation will be illicitly introduced.

On the other hand, the predicate must, to start with, have a given character of its own, independent of the subject to which it gets ascribed. If not, the relation of judgment has nothing determinate to predicate of the subject. Yet to inhere in the subject, rather than be merely its other or determining ground, the predicate must be a universal, whose given character remains self-identical in the individual without being reducible to what the individual contains. Not only does the universal of the predicate have a determination independent of the subject, but that universal must be susceptible of inhering in other given individuals. In this way, the immediate individual is equally an instance of the immediate universal that inheres in it.

This gives the individual a particularity that is immediate in that being an instance of the immediate universal neither determines or is determined by the individual character of any other instance, nor defines the range of predication the universal enjoys.

Because all these features are inherent in the subject–predicate relation basic to judgment, all forms of judgment must exhibit them, albeit with different further qualifications. Nevertheless, these features equally define a particular type of universal—the abstract universal, as well as the immediate individual and immediate particular to which it applies.

By its very nature, the abstract universal relates to the immediate individual in terms of what Hegel, and others, call the positive judgment, the judgment where the predicate is immediately ascribed to the subject at the same time that both terms have given determinations that are indifferent to the identity affirmed by the copula of the judgment. What is immediately individual falls outside the abstract universal just as the abstract universal falls outside what is immediately individual. Because the abstract universal inheres in a given individual that is its instance, the individual has a determinate being that is other to the universal with which it is identified, just as the universal cannot be confined to this its instance.

Consequently, the abstract universal is just as much in a negative relation, that of being an other to the immediate individual, rendering the subject–predicate connection of the positive judgment a negative judgment in which the subject is determined to *not* be the predicate.

Hegel maintains that the negative judgment can be positively expressed as a predication of particularity to the subject.<sup>6</sup> By being posited as not the abstract universal that inheres in it, the subject is determined to be particular. This becomes evident once one notes that the inherence of the

abstract universal in the immediate individual renders that individual an instance of its predicate. To be an instance is to be a particular, whereas to be a differentiated instance, distinguished from others, is to be an individual. Of course, to be *a* particular, the subject must also be an individual, and the positive reformulation of the negative judgement gives the individual in both capacities, for the judgment, 'the individual is the particular,' presents both the individual as individual and the individual posited as particular.

These features are obscured if the judgments involving the abstract universal are viewed as literally qualitative, involving determinate being. Given the pervasive reduction of universality to the abstract universal, it is not uncommon to find quality and universality equated, an equation that appears fulfilled when positive and negative judgments are identified as judgments of quality in which categories of determinate being predominate. Quality, however, must be distinguished from the universal. Quality is simply the unity of being and non-being that is in the form of being, and determinate being always involves qualitative relations where something and other are contrastively determined. Universality is the unity of self-determined determinacy, where otherness is always reintegrated within a subject that differentiates itself. Something does not inhere in another, but stands separated from it by some limit. The universal instead continues into the particular that is distinguished from it. Nonetheless, the abstract universal has a qualitative dimension insofar as the individual in which it inheres has a determination that is irrevocably other to the universal, just as the universal has something about it that remains ever beyond its instance. In these respects, categories of determinate being enter in, but only as qualifications of relationships involving universality, particularity and individuality.

Judgments of abstract universality manifest their own inability to be ultimate in the result to which they lead: the determination of the subject as particular, as an instance of a universal. This predication opens the door to judgments of class, in which the relations of instances of the same universal get determined. These relations are posited in the quantitative judgments, where predication applies to one, some or all members of a class.

### **Quantitative judgment and class membership**

Qualitative judgment resolves itself into quantitative judgment, and more specifically, into the singular judgment in virtue of how abstract universality determines the individual to be an instance. Since an instance is not an immediate individual, but an individual set in relation to other individuals of the same universal, its individuality is expressly mediated by its particularity. That is, the individual is a member of the class of individuals all subsumed under the same universal.

Because the universal contains this and other instances under its unity, the subsuming universal is not merely abstract. The universal no longer simply inheres in an immediate individual, unrelated to anything else in virtue of that inherence. Instead the universal subsumes individuals, which are set in relation in virtue of that subsumption. That relation, however, lays hold of only the particularity of each individual. Each is determined to be an instance, a particular, but how they otherwise are individuated from one another is left unspecified by their subsumption under the same universal. Consequently, although the subsumption of an individual under the universal entails that other individuals are similarly subsumed, their identity is not further determined. Hence, the judgment, 'the single individual is a member of the class' entails that *some* individuals are members of the class, leaving indefinite which ones belong. The 'singular' judgment thereby transforms itself into the 'particular' judgment.

Although extraneous material might be illicitly introduced to further identify which group of individuals belong to the class, particular judgment itself leaves unspecified how the group is defined. *Some* individuals, without further qualification, must belong, given that one individual is an instance of the subsuming universal of class membership. Of course, that *some*, but not *all* individuals belong, entails that some individuals do not belong. The particular judgment thus negates itself. This negation cannot signify simply that certain individuals fall outside the class, for that merely upholds the original particular judgment by affirming that certain others fall within the class. Because the specification of *some* individuals does not mark it off from any other determinate group, the negation of the particular judgment precludes excluding any group from class membership. If just any particular plurality does not belong, another particular plurality does belong, reinstating the particular judgment that is to be negated. Accordingly, the negation of the particular judgment must instead signify that *not some* individuals belong to the class. Since this negation is violated if either just one or just some individuals do belong, it can only be sustained by extending class membership to *all*. Then, and then alone, does membership in the class transcend particularity, as well as singularity. When *all* individuals are subsumed under the universal, the singular and particular judgments are both negated. Admittedly, the single individual and some individuals are still contained within the extension of the class, but they there belong only without excluding any others. In this way, the particular judgment results in the universal judgment, that all individuals are subsumed under the universal of class membership.

If reason were limited to the reflected universality of class membership, no judgment, not the singular nor the particular nor the universal, could provide grounds for what individuates class members or for what distinguishes one group of individuals from any other within the class. Because class membership does not individuate members or their subgroupings,

knowing their desiderata cannot be obtained by thinking the class, but only through empirical investigation. Similarly, since the particular identity of a class depends on what individuals and particulars belong to it, and these are left undetermined by class membership, there can be no *a priori* differentiation of classes. What defines each class is itself an empirical matter, to be decided by the corrigible labors of collection and comparison that uncover the family resemblances distinguishing natural, that is, empirically given, kinds.

Any attempt to make this the final word on reason is subverted by how quantitative judgment transforms itself into the judgment of necessity, in which class gets superseded by genus. As Hegel points out, once all individuals are subsumed under the universal, the individual cannot fail to be determined by that universal. In other words, once class membership extends to all individuals, the individual as such is the universal. The relation to other class members falls by the wayside, since if the individual must be determined by the universal, what individuates the individual is no longer indifferent to its universality, as is the case with class membership. Under the reflected universality of class, what makes the individual belong is that it is grouped with others to whom it has no other determinate relation beyond that inclusion. Through the universal judgment the individual becomes immediately determined as universal in virtue of its individual identity. This determination, however, is immediate, which is to say that the necessity of the connection with the universal is not mediated through any other factor. The universal does not inhere in the individual, besides other features it leaves untouched, nor does the individual figure as an instance of the universal, related to others through a bond that leaves out of account their respective individuation. Instead, the individual here has its own encompassing nature in the universal, with no residue distinguished from its universality.

### **Judgments of necessity and genus and species**

Judgments of necessity might appear to have little to do with genus and species, given how categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive judgments are commonly associated with substance, cause and effect, and reciprocity. Hegel himself endorses this connection, emphasized by Kant, but still affirms that all of these relationships figure in necessary judgment thanks to the determination of universal and individual in terms of genus and species.<sup>7</sup>

What distinguishes genus from class and abstract quality is that genus comprises the substance of the individuals that belong to it. Whereas class delimits membership while leaving everything particular and individual undetermined, genus pervades its individuals by dictating the particular features that distinguish their species-being. Individual accidents still

remain, insofar as what differentiates members of the lowest species is not defined by their species being.

### **Categorical judgment**

The quantitative judgment of 'allness' gives rise to the categorical judgment, that the individual, in virtue of its nature, is the universal. This is because the common subsumption of all members of a class renders each necessarily and immediately connected to their predicate. Although the categorical judgment identifies the individual with a nature and the universal immediately conjoined with that nature, their simultaneous distinction as subject and predicate is sustained to the extent that the individual figures in its species being in relation to the universal comprising the genus to which the species necessarily belongs. Fittingly, this species-genus connection is exhibited in every example Hegel gives ('gold is a metal,' etc.).<sup>8</sup>

The species being of the subject exhibits substantiality to the extent that it pervades all features of the individual. Yet, more than a relation of substance and accident is present, for the individual is immediately tied to a universal of necessity, a necessity grounded in the individual's own identity. Or, the individual as such is connected to this universal. To be a specific individual as such is equivalent to being an individual of a kind whose pervading communality immediately ties it to a distinguishable universal in which it is included. This relation is that of species and genus, where the individual kind has a nature necessarily contained within the genus. Although the connection of species and genus is necessary, it is no less immediate. No other term renders the species a necessary differentiation of the genus. The genus just consists of the species it has, without any further ground. The categorical judgment expresses this immediacy through its copula.

Moreover, although the subject has a species being contained in the genus, its individuality is otherwise still contingent. What distinguishes the subject from other individuals of its species is left undetermined by species being and the necessary differentiation of the genus. Consequently, what the categorical judgment posits is not the necessity of the subject qua individual, but the necessity of its species-genus connection.<sup>9</sup>

In positing the subject's species to be of the genus, the categorical judgment thus contains an asymmetry. Whereas the species being of the individual entails the genus, the genus can be in individuals of some other species.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the categorical affirmation of the necessary connection of species and genus leaves the individual existence of the species unnecessary.

This asymmetry is expressed in the hypothetical judgment, that if an individual of a certain species is, then so is an individual of a certain other species. On the one hand, this judgment posits the necessary connection of different species, which is the unity of the genus. On the other hand, the judgment leaves the being of each individual contingent.

### Hypothetical judgment

Ordinarily, the hypothetical judgment is linked to causality and causality is construed as a cause and effect relation governed by a law neutral to the kind of entities cause and effect may be. The hypothetical judgment is thus associated with efficient causality, which is indifferent to 'formal' causality and relations of genus and species. Yet hypothetical judgment arises from categorical judgment involving genus and species and in particular from the way in which the necessary connection between genus and species still leaves undetermined whether the genus will be realized by one species or another. Accordingly, are the cause and effect associated in hypothetical judgment individuals, whose kind is of no consequence, or rather particular species, whose connection rests on the genus? After all, causal relations are commonly acknowledged to relate entities of a certain kind, where the cause will be a type of state of affairs producing as its effect some other type of state of affairs. Although this presence of kind is usually treated as if cause and effect were linked by a law, law is properly indifferent to kind, subjecting all legal subjects to the same rule, whatever they may be. Hence, that cause and effect are types suggests a relation of species rooted in the genus they share, or alternately, a relation of individuals that have a genus and species and are dependent upon one another.

What the hypothetical judgment posits is not the existence of the extremes, but only the existence of their connection.<sup>11</sup> The causal relation holds whether or not there is an individual of that species, whose existence would entail that of an individual of some other type.

### Disjunctive judgment

The hypothetical judgment entails disjunctive judgment to the degree that the conditional relation of individuals with a species being gives the universal of the genus in its particularization, where the individual being of the genus is identical to the conditional, rather than necessary existence of each of its species.<sup>12</sup> The genus has a disjunctive realization because, as the hypothetical judgment makes explicit, although the genus exists in the individuals of its different species, none of them has a necessary existence. That is, the genus will exist in one *or* another of these individuals which represent one or another of its species. What allows the disjunctive judgment to have necessity is that the universal is the genus and that its disjunctive reality is the exhausted particularization of its species. Because class does not determine the particularity of its members, no disjunction of them can ever necessarily exhaust class membership (e.g. the class of bachelors is always open to addition).<sup>13</sup> By contrast, the disjunction of species is necessarily exhaustive because the unity of the genus differentiates its particulars, the different species, albeit without individuating the members of each species.

For this reason, the universal of the genus cannot consist of some mark abstracted from individuals. If that were the case, the genus would not immanently determine its disjunction, since what exists in each individual

besides any such mark would be indifferent to it, leaving the differentiation of both individuals and species external to the universal of the would-be genus.<sup>14</sup>

Although the disjunctive judgment connects the genus with its differentiation into species, that connection is present neither in the subject nor in the predicate. What disjunctive judgment does is posit their immediate connection. Because the connection is immediate, it remains necessary, rather than free, in that subject and predicate do not themselves posit their connection, but have it made externally by the judgment.

Nonetheless, because disjunctive judgment does posit their unity, the subject thereby gets determined to be the genus united with its necessary differentiation. This posited unity comprises the immanent combination of universal and particular generic to the concept. As such, it provides the distinctive content that is predicated in the type of judgment warranting description as the judgment of the concept. Combining the genus with its comprehensive division into species, this totality comprises a new type of universality to which judgments of the concept connect a correspondingly new type of individual.

### **Judgments of the concept and the universal of normativity**

Judgments of the concept determine normativity insofar as what is predicated of the subject is the *correspondence* of its particularity with its universality. Truth, right and beauty all involve the agreement of particular reality with what is universal in nature. This agreement, however, remains incomplete if individuality falls outside the correspondence. The relations of species and genus may equate the exhaustive particularization of the genus with its own concrete unity, but individuality still remains external to their unification. If reason were limited to the universality of genus and the corresponding judgments of necessity, individuality would remain opaque to thought and individual existence would resist evaluation.

Although the outcome of disjunctive judgment is the posited unity of the differentiation of species and their genus, that this is now predicated of the subject signifies that individuality is to be equated with that unity. What lies at stake is therefore the complete conceptual determination of individuality.

Because, however, the judgment of the concept sets the subject in immediate relation to the posited unity of particularity and universality, the individuality of the subject does not yet contain in itself the correspondence that is to be attributed to it. In other words, the agreement of the individual with the correspondence of particularity and universality is still something external, depending upon the immediate linkage of subject and predicate through the copula of the judgment.

### Assertoric judgment

Accordingly, the judgment of the concept is, to begin with, merely assertoric, immediately affirming a connection between individuality and the unity of particularity and universality that is not already present in the subject. The connection is posited by the judgment, but since the connection rests only on that positing, the individual cannot be otherwise certified to fit the evaluation conferred upon it. As far as it is immediately given, the subject might or might not correspond to the evaluative predicate. The individual is a candidate for normativity, of correspondence with the concrete unity of particularity and universality, something involving more than possessing abstract qualities, belonging to a class, or having species being. Nevertheless, because the individual does not contain that concrete unity, it is contingent whether it warrants the predication affirmed in assertoric judgment.

### Problematic judgment

Consequently, assertoric judgment is problematic, ascribing a normative predicate that may just as well fit as not fit the individual. Immediate individuals are not necessarily true, right or beautiful, but might or might not agree with such correspondence, depending upon their particularity and its connection with universality. This signifies that the individual does agree provided it possesses the proper constitution that is immanent to the universal. In other words, the problematic judgment issuing from assertoric judgment ends up positing that the individual *is* in accord with normativity insofar as its individuality contains the particular constitution wedded to universality.

### Apodeictic judgment

This yields the apodeictic judgment, that the individual, possessing a particular constitution entailed by the universal, is concretely universal, that is, a unity of particularity and universality. Because here the individual already contains what is predicated of it, what the judgment posits is 'necessarily' and 'objectively' the case. Unlike the categorical judgment, which connects the individual's species being with its genus, without providing any ground for that connection, the apodeictic judgment has a necessity that is fully grounded in the subject. This self-grounding exhibits the autonomy basic to conceptual determination, which allows truth to be obtained by yielding to the *sache selbst*, following out the internal constitution of the factor under consideration. That factor can be internally constituted and subject to apodeictic judgment only insofar as it is not externally determined by abstract universals, class membership and species being, but self-determined through the immanent connection between its individuality, particularity and universality. That immanent



connection is the corresponding constitutive of the normative universal.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the individual of judgments of the concept is the subject that is wholly conceptually determinate, what Hegel identifies as *die Sache selbst*.<sup>16</sup> This type of individual is what can correspond to the universality of normativity and figure in judgments of the concept. Its particular constitution can not just be species being, for that type of particularity leaves undetermined what individuates members of the species. The particularity in judgments of the concept is instead inherent to the individual.

## Beyond judgment

Because of this inherence, both subject and predicate actually contain the structure of judgment within themselves. The subject unites its individuality with the particular constitution by which it is connected with the predicate. For its part, the predicate connects the particular with the universal. By connecting both sides, the apodeictic judgment posits a relation between judgments, a relation mediated not by the immediacy of the copula, but by particularity. In this way, apodeictic judgment transforms the immediate connection of judgment into the mediated connection of syllogism.

By undergoing this self-transformation, apodeictic judgment brings closure to the forms of judgment and the corresponding types of individuality, particularity and universality. Because the systematic differentiation of judgment must proceed from nothing other than the concept, once the resultant series of shapes supersedes the immediate connection of subject and predicate constitutive of judgment, no further forms can arise without appeal to extraneous assumptions.

This closure does not, however, signify, that reason finds its ultimate expression in the culminating judgment of the concept. Both that judgment and the syllogisms that follow remain plagued by a discrepancy between what relates their terms and the terms themselves. In every form of judgment, the immediate connection of subject and predicate is still different from the united terms, even if they finally come to have contents fitting their identification. Similarly, in syllogism, the mediation of judgments remains different from the judgments it connects so long as their unity must be posited through inference. Eliminating these last vestiges of externality is equivalent to overcoming the 'subjectivity' of concept, judgment and syllogism.<sup>17</sup>

## Notes

1. For an account of how particularity and individuality are bound up with universality, see Richard Dien Winfield, *Autonomy and Normativity* 42–53 (2001); Richard Dien Winfield, 'From Concept To Judgment: Rethinking Hegel's Overcoming of Formal Logic,' 20 *Dialogue: Can. Phil. Rev.* 53 (2001).

2. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 206 (A70/B95) (Paul Guyer & Allan Wood trans., 1998).
3. Michael B. Foster discusses these features of the genus, in contrast to the abstract and concrete universals. Michael B. Foster, 'The Concrete Universal: Cook Wilson and Bosanquet,' 90 *Mind* 1–22 (1931).
4. Michael B. Foster exposes this limitation at length. Michael B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (1968).
5. For an account of how the concept transforms itself into the subject–predicate relation, see Winfield, *Concept To Judgment*, *supra* note 1, at 69–72.
6. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Die Lehre vom Begriff* 73 (1994) (1816 edition).
7. In this respect, Hegel points out that substance, causality and reciprocity figure in the three forms of necessary judgment not simply as categories of essence, but as incorporated into the form of concept determinations. See *id.* at 91.
8. G.W.F. Hegel, Hegel's Logic § 177, at 329 (William Wallace trans., 1975) [herein-after cited as *Encyclopedia Logic*].
9. Accordingly, Hegel remarks that the necessity of the relation of subject and predicate is still inner and not yet posited, as it will be in the hypothetical judgment. See Hegel, *supra* note 6, at 90.
10. Hegel claims that the advance from the categorical to the hypothetical judgment lies in this indifference of the individual being of the genus to its particular species. See *Encyclopedia Logic*, *supra* note 8, § 177, at 242.
11. Hegel, *supra* note 6, at 91.
12. Hegel accordingly claims that what engenders the disjunctive judgment is that the hypothetical judgment yields the universal in its expressly realized particularization. See *Encyclopedia Logic*, *supra* note 8, § 177, at 242.
13. Hegel makes an analogous contrast between the instantiation of abstract universals and the disjunction of the genus: the former allows for an empirical disjunctive judgment devoid of necessity, where the completeness is purely subjective, signifying that *A* is either *B* or *C* or *D*, etc. because *B*, *C* and *D* happen to have been found. See Hegel, *supra* note 6, at 93.
14. *Id.* at 94.
15. As Hegel points out, universality is here not what the individual ought to be, or the genus, but the corresponding that comprises the predicate of the apodeictic judgment. *Id.* at 102.
16. *Id.* at 102.
17. For a further analysis of this overcoming, see Richard Dien Winfield, 'Objectivity in Logic and Nature,' 34 *Owl of Minerva* 77 (2002–03).

# 9

## Why Are There Four Hegelian Judgments?

David Gray Carlson

Hegel is the philosopher of threes. In the *Encyclopedia* system, there is logic–nature–spirit. Within logic, there is being–essence–notion. Within notion, there is subject–object–idea. Within subjectivity, there is notion–judgment–syllogism. Yet, as everyone notices, when it comes to *judgment*, the structure is tetrachotomous. Here we find existence–reflection–necessity–notion. Why should there be *four* judgments when there are only three of everything else? Why must Shemp intrude upon the sublime perfection of Moe, Larry and Curly? What need we d'Artagnan when Porthos, Athos and Aramis seem the perfect threesome? Three's company. Four's a crowd!

In the *Science of Logic*,<sup>1</sup> Hegel does not allude very directly to the change, but in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel explains:

the different species of judgement derive their features from the universal forms of the logical idea itself. If we follow this clue, it will supply us with three chief kinds of judgement parallel to the stages of Being, Essence, and Notion. The second of these kinds, as required by the character of Essence, which is the stage of differentiation, must be doubled ... [W]hen the Notion, which is the unity of Being and Essence in a comprehensive thought, unfolds ... it must reproduce these two stages in a transformation proper to the notion ...<sup>2</sup>

In this passage, Hegel suggests that it is the function of judgment to replay the objective logic, which had sublated itself at the end of essence. In the course of this dumb show for the sake of subjective notion, essence is the twice-told tale. Essence is the realm of mediation, so that judgment must be immediate, *twice* mediated, and notional (i.e. triune).

Hegel returns to tetrachotomy of his method in his last chapter, where he writes that the negative moment is both a correlative *and* an immediate negation, both of which must be counted:

If one insists on *counting*, this *second* immediate [i.e. the negation of the negation] is, in the course of the method as a whole, the *third* term to the first immediate and the mediated. It is also, however, the third term to the first or formal negative and to absolute negativity or the second negative; now as the first negative is already the second term, the term reckoned as *third* can also be reckoned as *fourth*, and instead of a *triplicity*, the abstract form may be taken as a *quadruplicity*; in this way, the negative or the difference is counted as a *duality*.<sup>3</sup>

Hegel does not limit the above remark to judgment. Perhaps he is saying that, throughout the subjective logic, where the notion re-establishes its own reality, there is *always* quadruplicity, since mediation (i.e. negativity) is always both a mediation and an immediacy. If so, the question arises why *only* the judgment chapter and, we should add, the first third of syllogism, are overtly tetradic in form.

No doubt there is cause to suspect that the intrusion of tetrachotomy is a non-event unworthy of our attention. In the introduction to the *Science of Logic*, Hegel suggests that the only valid exposition of philosophy is one that conforms to the 'simple rhythm'<sup>4</sup> of method, which is arguably triune. The divisions, headings, sections and chapters serve only

to facilitate a preliminary survey and strictly are only of *historic* value. They do not belong to the content and body of the science but are compilations of an external reflection which has already run through the whole of the exposition and consequently knows and indicates in advance the sequence of its moments before these are brought forward by the subject matter itself.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Hegel *himself*, having worked through the system, inserts the headings solely for expositional convenience. The headings have nothing to do with the logic itself. This leads one to believe that perhaps we should make *nothing at all* out of the quadripartite headings in Judgment.

Shall we say that tetrachotomy is simply an error by Hegel? There is some reason to think so. In Measure, Hegel denounces Kant's table of categories precisely *because* they are tetrachotomous.<sup>6</sup> No triplicity inheres between Kant's quantity, quality, relation and modality, Hegel complains. For this very reason, Hegel writes, Kant 'was unable to hit on the third to quality and quantity.'<sup>7</sup> Hegel implies that 'modality' was Kant's true third – a term Hegel equates with Measure. 'Relation' – the nominal third – is dismissed as merely an 'insertion.'<sup>8</sup>

In spite of his measured quadrophobia, Hegel's judgments correspond to Kant's table of the logical functions of judgment from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet, Kant says, the logical forms of judgment are *directly connected*

to the very table of categories that Hegel has criticized.<sup>9</sup> According to the table of the logical functions in judgment:

I		
<i>Quantity of Judgments</i>		
Universal		
Particular		
Singular		
II		
<i>Quality</i>		
Affirmative		
Negative		
Infinite		
III		
<i>Relation</i>		
Categorical		
Hypothetical		
Disjunctive		
IV		
<i>Modality</i>		
Problematical		
Assertorical		
Apodictical		

Kant's Table of Logical Functions in Judgment<sup>10</sup>

All of Hegel's judgments can be found here. Of course, Hegel reverses Kant's priority and analyzes 'qualitative judgments' first, consistent with the general priority of quality over quantity. He also renames the major headings. Instead of quantity–quality–relation–modality, Hegel gives us existence–reflection–necessity–notion.

It is certainly odd that Hegel should criticize the quadripartite Table of Categories while following the related Table of the Logical Functions of Judgment. This led Marcuse to remark:

Although Hegel convincingly demonstrates that what is meant and treated as judgment by ordinary linguistic usage aims at the same ontological content as discovered by him, the treatment of judgment in the formal logic is not fitted into this framework. Insofar as Hegel attempts to do so and insists on the traditional 'table of judgments,' he confuses and obscures the great aspects of his own doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, in spite of the above, Slavoj Žižek, a brilliant reader of the *Science of Logic*, defends Hegel:

Let us immediately show our cards: the three judgments actually acquire a fourth because 'Substance is Subject'; in other words, the 'lack of identity' between subject and predicate is posited as such in the fourth judgement (that of the Notion).<sup>12</sup>

I want to join Žižek, in defending Hegel's tetrachotomous judgment, but I will do so on somewhat different terms. I will argue that it is not the *last*

but the *first* judgment – the judgment of existence or inherence – that stands for the diversity of subject and predicate. The last judgment in fact vindicates a *unity* between identity and difference. The ‘diverse’ subjectivity on display in the first of the judgments (which reappears in the last of the judgments) is an acknowledgement of an external reflection that haunts all parts of the *Science of Logic*.

Why are there four judgments? Let me now show *my* cards, like the dummy in a bridge game.

### Tour de jugement

The notion is an individual. More precisely, it is universal, particular *and* individual. We can put this colloquially: *The notion is itself, its other, and the unity of itself and other*. This can be expressed as  $A = \{A, B, C\}$ , so that we have the following matrix:

$A = \text{Universality}$	$=$	Itself
$B = \text{Particularity}$	$=$	Other
$C = \text{Individuality}$	$=$	Unity of Self and Other

In the expression,  $A = \{A, B, C\}$ ,  $A$  stands on both sides of the equation as the individual in its *abstract* and *concrete* forms.

Let us now count the four judgments.

(1) *Judgment of Existence*. In the judgment of existence, some property of the subject is singled out arbitrarily: Hegel’s example is ‘the rose is fragrant.’<sup>13</sup> It has the form  $A = \{A, B, C\}$ , but this is misleading. The rose is still a rose even if not fragrant. In this first judgment,  $A$  is abstract and self-sufficient. It has no need of the predicate. Speculatively,  $A$  is the *lack of identity* between itself and the notion. Therefore,  $A = \{A, B, C\}$ , but also  $A \neq \{A, B, C\}$ .<sup>14</sup> At first,  $A$  (the subject of notion’s self-judgment) is everything; the predicate  $\{A, B, C\}$  is nothing. Individuality rests with  $A$ , the abstract universal.

(2) *Judgment of Reflection*. Whereas the judgment of existence plucked some inessential predicate of the subject (the rose’s fragrance), the judgment of reflection makes the predicate universal; the subject is merely an instance of the grander predicate: this thing is useful, or this man is mortal.

In the earlier judgment of existence,  $A$  was what Hegel would call *diverse* from  $\{A, B, C\}$ . Diverse things are finite immediate beings. Finite beings must, on their logic, pass away. Being diverse,  $A$ ’s fate to become *nothing*.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, in the judgment of reflection, the subject becomes nothing. The predicate  $\{A, B, C\}$  is *everything*.<sup>16</sup> Since the predicate is fixed,<sup>17</sup> it now claims for itself the state of individuality, at the expense of the subject. One way of expressing this is that abstract  $A$  (the subject) turns into notional  $B$  (particularity), so that now  $B = \{A, B, C\}$ .

(3) *Judgment of Necessity*. In the judgment of necessity, the genetic requirements of the subject are emphasized. Instead of ‘this individual is mortal,’ we have ‘*all* individuals are mortal.’

In the judgment of reflection, the subject (*B*) stated, ‘I do not exist. I am not the predicate  $\{A, B, C\}$ .’ Yet if  $\{A, B, C\}$  is diverse, it too must pass away as a finite being. But now *B* and  $\{A, B, C\}$  have a commonality. They both must pass away. This is their *necessary connection*. *Connection* (or *copula*) is the only thing that has staying power. Subject and predicate have no ‘being for self.’ Individuality now resides in the *unity* of subject and predicate. *B* morphs into *C*. Now  $C = \{=, \neq\}$ . *C* represents ‘the unity of self and other,’ in our colloquial formula. But shall the copula be  $\{=\}$  or  $\{\neq\}$ ? This is a matter of blind accident. All we know is that subject and predicate are related *positively* or *negatively*.

(4) *Judgment of the Notion*. The judgment of the notion is normative: this individual is as she should be, or this house is good.

The copula was front and center in the earlier judgment of reflection. But copulae cannot do without subject and predicate. These are the means by which *C*, the individual, expresses itself as copula. Individuality as copula now subsumes subject and the predicate. Notion now knows itself to be fully present in *all* its moments. Key here is the idea that there are notional moments and non-notional moments. But how can we tell which is which? Nothing in these moments betrays their true nature. About these moments there is nothing but doubt – *except* that *either* the moments are notional *or* they are not. Meanwhile,  $C = \{A, B, C\}$  and  $C \neq \{A, B, C\}$ . This is the judgment of the notion.

Across the four judgments, then, individuality travels around. It starts as the subject, it travels to the predicate, it travels to the copula, and it encompasses the copula *and* the extremes, while still preserving the necessity of non-notional contingency. By this means, the four judgments replicate the logic of quality, quantity, actuality and notionality.

## Tour de syllogisme

We cannot leave the matter here. The chapter (i.e. syllogism) that follows hard upon the funeral baked meats of judgment witnesses a restoration of triunity. If there were four judgments, why not four syllogisms? Compare the subheadings of judgment and syllogism:

<u>Judgment</u>	<u>Syllogism</u>
Existence	Existence
Reflection	Reflection
Necessity	Necessity
Notion	–

Whereas judgment is tetrachotomous, syllogism is trichotomous. There is no syllogism of the notion. Why is trichotomy restored after an interregnum in which tetrachotomy runs riot?<sup>18</sup>

Before I say why, let me summarize syllogism in plain terms. Present here is a very simple move in which Hegel turns skepticism on itself. To illustrate, take the contradictory statement, 'There are no truths.' This itself is a truth. Similarly, 'there is only subjectivity' is an objectivity. These paradoxes go to the very heart of Hegel's logical system. If we take the statement 'there are no truths' to be *A*, and if we take the *truth* to be notion, the predicate of *A* is the *truth*. 'There are no truths' can be expressed as  $A \neq \{A, B, C\}$ . But this is a truth, which implies  $A = \{A, B, C\}$ .

Here is how syllogism proceeds.

(1) *Syllogism of Existence*. At the end of Judgment, the individual was the copula that colonized the extremes. This is syllogism. At this point, judgment ceased to be judgment. As G.R.G. Mure puts it, in the apodeictic judgment ('Notion is good'), the subject does not *have* goodness. To *have* is a relation of subject to predicate. Rather, the subject *is* goodness. There is a direct, performative connection between the extremes of the syllogism which makes a distinction between subject and predicate no longer appropriate.<sup>19</sup>

Syllogism concerns proof, and proof for Hegel is the copula, or the middle term *between* the extremes. But, between  $\{A, B, C\}$ , which of these is properly the middle term? Nothing in syllogism determines the matter definitively. An outside intelligence must establish this by mere dogmatic assertion. So the proposition that is proven is that *all syllogisms are subjective. They prove nothing*.

(2) *Syllogism of Reflection*. Notice the preceding theory of syllogism purports to be an *induction*. That syllogisms prove nothing presupposes that we have examined every single syllogism there ever was and, by empirical observation, have induced that *failure* is the universal predicate. But this is to say that failure is really *in* the syllogisms after all. This claim is not subjective but belongs to the object.

(3) *Syllogism of Necessity*. In the syllogism of reflection, every single syllogism was a failure. This implies that one single individual syllogism successfully represents every other. Syllogism presents us with perfect *analogies*. Analogy works if the individual is universal. The trait of one is the trait of every other. If the earth is inhabited, the moon must be inhabited, as Hegel famously reasoned.<sup>20</sup> This is the syllogism of Necessity. It stands for the fact that the individual notion is universal in its absolute necessity to particularize itself in the objective world. At this point, notion is objective.

Let us return, however, to (1) the syllogism of Existence. Significantly, it alone is tetrachotomous, like Judgment. The syllogism of Existence was supposed to be an objective proof, but it ended up depending on subjective



judgment. In effect, syllogism falls back on the judgment of the notion. There is a precise coincidence between judgment of the notion and the syllogism of Existence. That is why there are four syllogisms of Existence. The fourth syllogism is the utter failure of *all* syllogisms to prove *anything*. It stands for a retreat to subjective judgment as its essential truth.

What I am suggesting is that there is a *reverse double counting* between judgment and syllogism. Judgment of the notion is exactly the *same* as the syllogism of Existence. The trichotomy of syllogism therefore swallows the excess in judgment. What was fourth in judgment becomes first in syllogism. If the fourth judgment shares an identity with the first syllogism (of three), triunity suppresses the tetrachotomy unloosed by judgment. The system renders itself apparently triune again.

### Why four art thou?

With these brief *tours de jugement et syllogismes*, we can finally say what the judgmental tetrachotomy means in relation to Hegel's entire logical system.

Zižek, claims that the system is haunted by 'the silent fourth'<sup>21</sup> and that the fourth judgment represents the manifestation of this vanishing mediator. Zižek, compares the silent fourth to the dummy in contract bridge. In bridge, the partner who first names the trumps seizes control of the partnership.<sup>22</sup> The silent partner must lay down her hand and remain silent. 'Table talk,' though common, is strictly forbidden. In her silence, the dummy nevertheless controls the game. All players react to the dummy.

A silent fourth occupies the entire Objective Logic.<sup>23</sup> Early on, the understanding emerges as such when it proposes that 'becoming' is a determinate being. Hegel writes, 'That the whole, the unity of being and nothing, is in the one-sided determinateness of being is an external reflection; but in the negation, in *something* and *other* and so on, it will come to be *posited*.'<sup>24</sup> Here Hegel says that this conclusion of the Understanding – that becoming *is* – is not strictly necessitated as a matter of logic. It comes from the outside. This 'external reflection' is the silent fourth that energizes the logic.

Later, Hegel writes that quantity depends upon an other for its determination. Who is this 'other' but the silent fourth? Of quantity, Hegel writes that 'determinateness in general is outside itself.'<sup>25</sup> Quantity is 'posited as self-repelling, as in fact having the relation-to-self as a determinateness in another something (which is *for itself*).'<sup>26</sup> This means that quantitative distinction is externally imposed. Quantity requires a silent fourth – an external mathematician who *counts*.

Measure likewise points to a *measurer* – a silent fourth external to the logic itself that raises the temperature of things in order to produce a qualitative change. Qualitative change is accomplished by quantitative

change, which is defined as that which comes from the outside. 'As a quantum [Measure] is an indifferent magnitude open to external determination and capable of increase and decrease. But as a measure it is also distinguished from itself as a quantum, as such an indifferent determination, and is a limitation of that indifferent fluctuation about a limit.'<sup>27</sup> Thus, measure stands for susceptibility to outside manipulation. A silent fourth is directly implied by measure.

Essence points to the fourth whenever the concept of external reflection is invoked. External reflection implies a thing's indifference to what an outside intelligence thinks of it.<sup>28</sup> This external intelligence is likewise the silent fourth – the subjectivity that being requires in order to endure over time.

There is, however, a strange reversal when we reach the notion. The notion is the result of finite being having passed away. What remains standing is the notion. But passing away is always also a preservation. This is the law of sublation. As all Hegelians know, *aufheben* means simultaneously to cancel and to preserve.

What is preserved in notion is a ghostly memory of Being.<sup>29</sup> Being is inwardized or recollected *immediacy* or *abstraction*.<sup>30</sup> This now becomes the silent fourth to notion – the thing that traumatizes the subject and keeps it in motion. Whereas the silent fourth had been a subjective intrusion on the object, now the silent fourth is an objective intrusion on the subject. This is what provokes the system to identify the universal as the first element of the notional trinity. This act of abstraction is precisely what the notional individual cannot swallow. This is why the notion is self-divisive and generative of the realm of judgment. There is the *absent reality* that notion must fill out through the dumb show of judgment.

Ironically, the silent fourth in the realm of being was the subjectivity yet to come. Now the silent fourth becomes the trauma of the being that was supposedly repressed.<sup>31</sup>

The silent fourth finally speaks in judgment. It is the extraneous, mad, external mediator that binds the system together. It turns out that Shemp was truly in charge of the stooges all along, even though he appeared at the dusk of their long career, when the owl of stooge Minerva finally flew.

Precisely where does this mad moment of disjunction (which secretly conjoins all) appear? It is present in the judgment of existence. But it is swallowed again by the predicate, reappears in the copula and continues into syllogism.

It even survives syllogism. The disjunctive syllogism represents the point that the universal subject is all its predicates, but this subject still requires a non-notional object – a non-universal that constitutes a fourth to triune subjectivity. The subject's object must eventually be rendered notional. Through the dialectic of objectivity (mechanism–chemism–teleology), the silent fourth is further developed until, in Teleology, the silent fourth is

revealed to be the subject's very own self. Two subjects face each other in Teleology. The silent fourth itself becomes three. Shemp is now Moe, Larry and Curly. That is the very Idea of Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

Yet neither is Idea exempt from the trauma of the silent fourth. In Hegel's very last chapter, method and subject matter supposedly conjoin.<sup>32</sup> Method is the one and only subject. We have the Understanding, its negation, Dialectical Reason, and the Negation of the Negation – Speculative Reason. But when all is said and done, there is a hole in the whole. Negation of the negation is not the restoration of the positive thing originally negated. It is less than that. This very absence is the silent fourth – the non-notional individual which guarantees that Logic never ends. It is only by virtue of the silent fourth that Logic is a circle. What traumatizes the method is the silent fourth rendered manifest for a moment in Judgment.

## Conclusion

Hegel's method is traditionally viewed as the passage from immediate Understanding to mediated Dialectical Reason to Speculative Reason, which holds the prior two positions in tension. Yet there is always a fourth. Method must work on *something*. This something is an irrational, non-methodical material without which the Heraclitean flux cannot flow. In the judgment chapter, this 'silent fourth' finally speaks. In judgment, not only must the notion objectify itself in a notional way, it must judge its non-self – say what this *is*. The three notional moments, together with the non-notional self, comprise Hegel's four judgments.

## Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*]; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Georg Lasson ed., 1975) (2 vol) [hereinafter cited as *WL*].
2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic* § 171 (William Wallace trans., 1975).
3. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 836, 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 498.
4. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 54; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 35.
5. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 54; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 35.
6. Kant's categories are as follows:

I.	II.
<i>Of Quantity</i>	<i>Of Quality</i>
Unity	Reality
Plurality	Negation
Totality	Limitation
III	
<i>Of Relation</i>	
Of Inherence and Subsistence (substantia et accidentia)	
Of Causality and Dependence (cause and effect)	
Of Community (reciprocity between the agent and patient)	

## IV

## Of Modality

Possibility – Impossibility

Existence – Non-existence

Necessity – Contingence

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 62 (J.M.D. Meiklejohn trans., 1990).

7. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 327; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 337.
8. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 327; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 337 ('Einschiebung'). For a discussion of Hegel's critique of Kant's tetrachotomy, see David Gray Carlson, 'Hegel's Theory of Measure,' 25 *Cardozo L. Rev.* 129, 135–7 (2003).
9. John W. Burbidge, 'Hegel's Logic,' in *Handbook of the History of Logic* 131, 133 (2004) ('There seemed to be something contingent and positivistic about working from a simple table of judgements that had emerged from the history of logic to determine what are the basic categories of the understanding'); Richard Dien Winfield, *Autonomy and Normativity* 59 (2001) ('Kant is taken to task for metaphysically stipulating the character of the transcendental structure by conceiving it as a noumenal self determined through such unfounded devices as a metaphysical deduction of the categories, which simply adopts, with certain unargued modifications, the typology of judgment of received tradition'). For Kant, the logical function of judgment is the act of the understanding in synthesizing the manifold into one object. *Critique of Pure Reason*, *supra* note 6, at 82–3. What judgment does is to bring the manifold under one of the categories. *Id.* at 83, 161.
10. *Critique of Pure Reason*, *supra* note 6, at 56.
11. Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* 127 (Seyla Benhabib trans., 1987).
12. Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* 179 (1991).
13. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 633; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 275.
14. The supplementation of the equality with an inequality is pursuant to Hegel's very early instruction:

[T]he subject has a number of determinatenesses other than that of the predicate, and also that the predicate is more extensive than the subject. Now if the content is speculative, the *non-identical* aspect of subject and predicate is also an essential moment, but in the judgement this is not expressed... . To help express the speculative truth, the deficiency is made good ... by adding the contrary proposition ...

- SL*, *supra* note 1, at 90–1; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 76.
15. Errol E. Harris, *The Spirit of Hegel* 253 (1993) ('Each partial and provisional element, therefore, fails to maintain itself in isolation, because its true and only nature is as a moment in the whole, so that it demands and goes over into its other to unite with it and to constitute a more complete and adequate exemplification of the ultimate universal principle of wholeness').
16. Or, to be more precise, the predicate has a reflective relationship to the subject. The predicate is the *appearance* of a subject.
17. One of the consequences of the predicate's fixity is that the subject multiplies. The judgments of reflection are therefore singular, particular (where there are a *class* of subjects distinguishable from other subjects), and universal.
18. Here is G.R.G. Mure's answer to the question, of which I will confess I can make no sense:

But the puzzle vanishes if we do not look for one-one correspondence, but remember that in the rationality of Syllogism the 'broken-backedness' of the Understanding is mediated and transcended. If we insist on pressing the correspondence we must say, I think, that Syllogism of Necessity 'corresponds to' notional Judgment as well as to Judgement of Necessity.

G.R.G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic* 208 (1950). The 'broken back' of the Understanding refers to the untenability of the judgment of existence, where subject and predicate were diverse, finite beings. The judgment of existence was the Understanding's initial proposition about judgment, but why this fate of the Understanding implies the triplicity of syllogism eludes me.

19. G.R.G. Mure, *The Philosophy of Hegel* 136 (1965).
20. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 692; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 339.
21. Žižek, *supra* note 12, at 179.
22. *Id.*
23. See Clark Butler, *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* 232 (1996) ('Our own subjectivity is concealed in our objective world').
24. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 110; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 97.
25. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 185; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 177.
26. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 185; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 177.
27. *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 334; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 344.
28. For this reason, external reflection is 'a positing of the immediate.' *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 403; 1 *WL* *supra* note 1, at 18.
29. See Ermanno Bencivenga, *Hegel's Dialectical Logic* 12 (2002) ('Hegel's logic is one of recollection, of memory, its necessity is the internal consistency of what is remembered ... ') (footnote omitted).
30. *Erinnerung* can be translated as 'inwardization or recollection.' Thus, Miller's translation reads: 'Not until knowing *inwardizes*, *recollects* itself out of immediate being, does it through this mediation find essence.' *SL*, *supra* note 1, at 389; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 3 ('Erst indem das Wissen sich aus dem unmittelbaren Sein erinnert, durch diese Vermittlung findet es das Wesen').
31. Butler, *supra* note 21, at 233 ('The subjective self-concept encounters an object which is the dead remnant of that very subjective self-concept, a remnant left over from its incipient historical self-construction').
32. Angelica Nuzzo, in this volume, describes how method ultimately stands over against all of the 'erroneous' moments of the logic that precedes it. Angelica Nuzzo, *The End of Hegel's Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method*, *infra*, at 18.

# 10

## The System of Syllogism

*Richard Dien Winfield*

Since Aristotle, syllogism has cast a fateful shadow upon the power of reason. Recognized to be the great conveyor of rationality, syllogism has equally been acknowledged to be beset by limits.

Neither Plato, nor his greatest pupil, Aristotle, see fit to restrict reason to syllogistic inference. Given how every syllogism operates with premises, they recognize that if reason were confined to syllogizing, it could never account for the assumptions on which its conclusions ultimately rested. Any attempt to ground those premises would require further inferences whose own premises would always stand in need of further deduction. The unconditioned knowledge required for philosophical wisdom would instead depend upon transcending the limits of syllogism, something Aristotle and Plato sought by employing an intuitive understanding of first principles, those privileged givens that allegedly have an absolute immediacy mediating everything else that is and can be known. Such intuitive cognition would then empower syllogism to infer what would follow from the first principles.

The role of syllogism takes on a different cast, though, once the intuitive understanding of first principles is called into question. Privileged givens can never be shielded from sceptical challenge since immediacy can be ascribed to any content and no immediacy can be justified by anything else without forfeiting its alleged primacy. If the repudiation of intuitive understanding leaves reason with no resource other than syllogism, philosophical argument is condemned to an empty formality, where every inference rests upon premises that can never be fully proven. At best, syllogism becomes a regulative imperative, leaving reason ever seeking, but never attaining the unconditioned condition of judgments.

Whether syllogism be supplemented by an intuitive intelligence or left alone as reason's solitary device, it can hardly account for its own defining nature, let alone provide an exhaustive treatment of its particular types. Inference cannot be inferred without taking itself for granted. Further, because inference employs premises that are given rather than derived, it

can no more legitimate its own concept than that of its premises. Moreover, no empirical survey of inference can reliably locate its nature, since what observed examples share may be contingent rather than necessary commonalities.

To be logically accounted for, syllogism must be determined apart from any contingent content. This does not mean that syllogism per se is completely formal. It does have a content consisting minimally in the mediated succession of terms comprising inference. Commonly, these terms are identified as three successive judgments, which are just as commonly assumed to be determined in their own right and only externally related through the inference to which they belong. The connection of inference thereby appears to be something subjective, rather than objective, residing not in the content of the judgments themselves, but in the arrangement imposed upon them from without, by some syllogizer. Even if a conclusion is necessitated by the major and minor premises, these enter into the inference as givens. Nevertheless, the immediacy they possess is just as much superseded by the inference of which they are a part. To the degree that the conclusion follows within the syllogism from them and them alone, it certifies that their connection is not just subjective, but inherent in their content.

Yet how are the terms that are both initially immediate and posited as mediated further determined in syllogism per se? To the degree that syllogism incorporates judgments, these judgments must themselves enter in only as they are necessarily determined. To eliminate all empirical contingencies, the logical investigation of judgment must consider the subject as such and the predicate as such. Instead of predicating some particular universal, judgment per se predicates the universal as such, and does so not of some contingent subject, but of the individual or particular as such. Similarly, if inference is to be categorized independently of all contingent content, its constituents must be as equally conceptually determined as those that comprise the terms of judgment. Moreover, if the minimal nature of syllogism involves the universal, the particular and the individual per se, then any differentiation of types of syllogism will be necessary and exhaustive only if it relies upon nothing but the generic types of judgment they contain and the types of universality, particularity and individuality that distinguish these judgments. If differentiation of forms of syllogism is to be non-arbitrary, it must emerge from what minimally characterizes syllogism. Otherwise their differentiation will be alien to the nature of syllogism and contingent upon some extraneous factor.

Although philosophers since Aristotle have freely employed syllogism as a central fixture of philosophical investigation, a systematic account of it has been wanting. The great exception to this neglect is Hegel. To escape arbitrariness, Hegel attempts to think through how the differentiation of judgment achieves closure when a type emerges whose connection overcomes the immediacy of judgment's copula, transforming itself into the

mediated connection minimally comprising syllogism. Having thereby provided an allegedly non-arbitrary account of syllogism *per se*, Hegel then proceeds to think through the differentiation of its forms. He does this by following out how the minimal relationship of syllogism engenders a series of self-transforming forms of inference that exhausts itself by reaching a shape that eliminates the type of mediation constitutive of syllogism.

Not surprisingly, the forms of syllogism arise in an order that largely follows the order of the forms of judgment incorporated within them. One glaring discrepancy stands out. Whereas judgment successively takes the form of judgments of determinate being (qualitative), of reflection (quantitative), of necessity (modal), and of the concept (normative), syllogism takes only three forms correlating with the first three of the four forms of judgment. In Hegel's account the first form of syllogism is that of determinate being, relating qualitative judgments involving abstract universals, particulars and individuals. This form of inference transforms itself into the syllogism of reflection, linking quantitative judgments involving class membership. The syllogism of necessity follows, containing genus-species relationships. What is lacking is a form of syllogism that might correlate with judgments of the concept whose normative relations involve the concrete universal. Instead, the syllogisms of necessity allegedly exhaust the necessary forms of inference by eliminating the difference between what is concluded and that by which it is inferred. This purportedly undermines the mediation constitutive of syllogism, removing the remaining externality of its connections, in which its abiding subjectivity resides. With the universal and particular relations of individuals now completely posited, the category of objectivity has emerged.

The only way to evaluate the anomaly between the series of judgments and syllogisms is to think through their determinations and establish whether they transform themselves as Hegel suggests. Doing so will allow us to determine to what degree a systematic account of inference has been achieved.

In drawing upon Hegel's investigation to comprehend syllogism, the logical starting point consists in examining whether syllogism does arise from the self-engendered closure of the judgment forms, and if so, with what character it emerges. This may allow us to lay hold of the minimal determination of syllogism, which no less becomes a particular form of syllogism as other forms arise from it.

### **From judgment to syllogism**

On Hegel's account, the forms of judgment achieve closure through the connection posited in the apodeictic judgment. Apodeictic judgment, like the assertoric and problematic judgments from which it arises, involves the concrete universal, which unites particularity and universality. This



correspondence of particularity and universality is predicated of the individual in all three of these judgments of the concept. Because the assertoric judgment makes this connection immediately, providing no ground for the individual to fit this correspondence, the individual may or may not fit, depending upon what particularity it has. The problematic judgment posits just this, which yields the apodeictic judgment insofar as the latter specifies that the individual has the unity of particularity and universality by containing the appropriate particularity. As a consequence, both subject and predicate now take on the form of judgments, containing an immediate connection between individual and particular (the erstwhile subject) and particular and universal (the erstwhile predicate). Moreover, the identity posited by the apodeictic judgment resides no longer simply in the immediate connection of the copula (expressed by 'is'). What connects the individual in the subject with the universal in the predicate is instead the particularity both equally contain, which is why the connection is not contingent upon some subjective association, but necessary and objective.

Although the apodeictic judgment nominally has the form of a subject–predicate relation, the connection it effects leaves judgment behind. More precisely, judgment is incorporated in a more concrete mediation of the individual, the particular and the universal. The apodeictic judgment has brought closure to the forms of judgment by transforming predication into a process in which an immediate relation between individual and particular ( $I-P$ ) is connected with an immediate relation between particular and universal ( $U-P$ ), leaving individuality and universality related through particularity ( $I-P-U$ ). What has emerged is syllogism, taking the immediate form of an inference concluding universality from individuality by means of particularity.

These transformations, which Hegel has duly followed, explain both how syllogism necessarily arises from judgment and how syllogism immediately comprises the determination of universality from individuality through the mediation of particularity. This determination is the minimal form of syllogism to the degree that it rests on no inferences and will be presupposed by any that follow from it. In this regard, it comprises syllogism *per se*.

## Differentiation of the forms of syllogism

Any systematic differentiation of the forms of syllogism must follow from  $I-P-U$ , which arises from apodeictic judgment. Appeal to any other resource will introduce factors wholly extraneous to syllogism, contaminating the development with arbitrary additions. But does syllogism transform itself into a succession of different forms yielding one another, before achieving closure by turning into some category transcending inference?

The first task is to examine what syllogism immediately is. There might appear to be a discrepancy between what Hegel presents as the minimal

form of syllogism and the elements of apodeictic judgment from which it follows. Apodeictic judgment can transform subject and predicate into judgments connecting individual and universal through particularity precisely because the universality at stake is *concrete*, containing particularity, just as the individuality involved is inherently connected to the universal through its own particularity. Yet, when Hegel examines syllogism as it results from apodeictic judgment, he finds a syllogism involving *abstract* universals, particulars and individuals. This harkens back to qualitative judgment.<sup>1</sup> What made the universal of qualitative judgment abstract is that everything individuating the individual in which that universal inheres was given independently of that universal. Predicating the abstract universal of the individual has no bearing upon whatever other qualities it possesses. This individual therefore both is and is not that universal, just as it can be connected with many different abstract universals by way of alternate particulars.

One need only examine the outcome of apodeictic judgment to understand why it yields a syllogism whose constituent parts are immediately given. Although the subject and predicate of the apodeictic judgment involve an individual and universal inherently containing the particularity uniting them, no intermediary connects this individual with its particularity or this particularity with the universal. Through apodeictic judgment, the individual and the universal obtain a mediated identity, but one resting upon a subject involving an immediate connection between individual and particular, and a predicate involving an immediate connection between particular and universal. What results is a syllogism uniting the individual with the universal through two judgments in which, on the one hand, the individual is immediately identified with the particular and on the other hand, the particular is immediately identified with the universal. Due to the immediacy of both relations, their elements have a givenness indifferent to their connection. The universal, particular and individual are therein abstract in that the universal and particular inhere in an individual whose other features are indifferent to them, just as the universal inheres in a particular left otherwise undetermined by it. Because the terms all involve a residual otherness not absorbed in their interconnection, the inference is qualitative, or, in other words, a syllogism of determinate being. It exhibits the same limitations that afflict the qualitative judgments comprising its major and minor premises as well as the conclusion drawn from them.

### **The minimal form of syllogism: the syllogism of determinate being**

The syllogism of determinate being undergoes a development that unsurprisingly parallels the transformations of qualitative judgment. Logically speaking, the qualitative syllogism consists in uniting the immediately

given individual with the abstract universal through an immediately given particular. This can be represented through three successive judgments: a major premise, 'the immediate individual is the immediate particular,' a minor premise, 'the immediate particular is the abstract universal,' and a conclusion, 'the immediate individual is the abstract universal.'

Just as the qualitative judgment, 'the immediate individual is the abstract universal,' entails its negation, 'the immediate individual is not the abstract universal,' so the qualitative syllogism immediately subverts what it concludes. The abstract universal may be predicated of the immediate individual owing to the immediate connection of abstract universal and immediate particular (*U-P*) and of immediate particular and immediate individual (*P-I*). Nonetheless, the indifference of the terms to their connection signifies that a different abstract universal also can be predicated of the same individual through the same particular, just as much as that another individual can have the same universal predicated of it through the same particular and that other particulars can connect the same individual and universal. All these options are possible because (1) the individual has features having nothing to do with its tie to the mediating particular, allowing it to be connected to other particulars through which it can be united with other universals, (2) the mediating particular is connected to other universals having nothing to do with the universal concluded of the individual, allowing other universals to be predicated of the individual, and (3) the universal is not exclusively tied to the particular any more than the individual, allowing other particulars to connect it with the same or different individual. As Hegel explains, the individual contains a plurality of features, any of which can serve as the particularity relating it to a universal, just as any particularity contains more than the determinacy of the abstract universal to which it connects, allowing it to be a *medius terminus* to many universals.<sup>2</sup> Which individual is connected to which universal through which particular is therefore completely accidental to the qualitative syllogism.<sup>3</sup>

In light of this contingency, Hegel designates the qualitative inference a merely subjective<sup>4</sup> or formal<sup>5</sup> syllogizing, whose terms may just as well be substituted by others, and whose thinking always reflects upon independently given contents, whose necessity can never be rationally established.<sup>6</sup> If reason were confined to qualitative syllogisms and the qualitative judgments they contain, philosophy could never prove the universal validity of any content and would always be dependent upon other sources for what it draws inferences about. Powerless to account for content, reason might certify the consistency of its conclusions, but never attest to their truth. The logic of reason would be the formal logic to which it is reduced by logical positivism.

Why reason cannot be confined to qualitative syllogizing is revealed by the transformation that inference undergoes through its very own working.

Due to the disseminating connections that leave the immediate individual, given particular and abstract universal subject to indefinitely multiple substitutions, the conclusion of the qualitative judgment countermands itself. The immediate individual is connected just as much to as not to the abstract universal by the given particular serving as predicate of the major premise and as subject of the minor premise.

Nonetheless, the result is not simply negative. Whatever individual is united with whatever abstract universal by whatever given particular it shares, the conclusion renders that universal connected to that particular through that individual. Once the conclusion links that universal to the individual, the given connection between the same individual and the particular ties the universal to that particular by way of the individual they share. In other words, the initial form of the qualitative judgment ( $I-P-U$ ) results in a syllogism with the figure  $U-I-P$ , positing the connection of the universal with the particular through the individual. This remains a qualitative syllogism in that the universal is still abstract, connected to an individual otherwise undetermined by it, through which it is linked to a particular possessing other features equally indifferent to that universal. Consequently, the content of the related terms is just as accidental as in the first form of qualitative syllogism.<sup>7</sup> The universal could equally be connected to the same particular through different individuals who share the latter, to different particulars through the same individual they share, or to different particulars through different individuals. Once more, this renders the conclusion subjective, for the abstract universal is just as much connected as not connected to the given particular through the individual.

Yet, again, the inference that is made generates a new figure of qualitative syllogism. By concluding the link between the universal and the particular, while connecting the universal and the individual, the second figure ties the particular to the individual by way of the universal they have in common. What results is a third figure of qualitative syllogism,  $P-U-I$ , where the particular is united with the individual through the universal. At first glance, this inference is no less subjective than its two predecessors. The particular could just as well be connected through the same universal to other individuals having it in common, just as it could be tied to the same individual through other universals inhering in that individual as well as to other individuals through other universals. With this third figure, however, something has been achieved that pushes beyond the limits of the qualitative syllogism.

To begin with, all three components, the universal, the particular, and the individual, have now filled every position in the syllogism. Each has occupied not only both extremes, but also the position of *medius terminus*, connecting the others. This intermediary role is played in the first figure by the particular, in the second by the individual, and in the third by the universal. Insofar as the universal, particular and individual can no longer be

distinguished by what role they play in inference, their form distinctions have become as much a matter of indifference as their contents. Not only is each term subject to substitution by other universals, particulars and individuals, respectively, but their very form as universal, particular, and individual has been rendered irrelevant. This irrelevance gains independent expression in the so-called quantitative or mathematical syllogism,<sup>8</sup> according to which, if one term is equal to a second and that second is equal to a third, then the first is equal to that third (i.e. if  $a = b$  and  $b = c$ , then  $a = c$ ). Mathematical syllogism might be considered a fourth figure, whose schema is  $U-U-U$ ,<sup>9</sup> in that its terms express the same commonality, without anything distinguishing them besides their numerical identity. Yet, because quantitative equivalency abstracts from all qualitative differences, including those specific to the concept, namely universality, particularity and individuality, its empty transitivity eliminates the very factors logically constitutive of syllogism.

Although the qualitative indifference of the mathematical inference reflects one aspect of the outcome of the three figures of qualitative syllogism, more has been established. Specifically, the second ( $U-I-P$ ) and third ( $P-U-I$ ) figures have together provided proof of the major and minor premises ('the universal is the particular' and 'the individual is the particular') of the first figure ( $I-P-U$ ), which presents as immediate what these figures posit as mediated in their respective conclusions ( $U-P$  and  $P-I$ ). This completes the mediation of each figure by one another. The process was already underway with the move from the first to the second figure. As Hegel points out, the second figure ( $U-I-P$ ) was mediated through the first figure ( $I-P-U$ ) in that the second figure's major premise,  $U-I$ , was concluded by the first, while the conclusion of the second figure, ( $U-P$ ), mediates the first figure's minor premise ( $U-P$ ).<sup>10</sup> For its part, the third figure ( $I-U-P$ ) presupposes the first ( $I-P-U$ ) and second ( $U-I-P$ ) figures, which conclude, respectively, the relations of individual to universal ( $I-U$ ) and universal to particular ( $U-P$ ) comprising the premises from which the third figure concludes the relation of individual to particular.<sup>11</sup> Through these reciprocal mediations, each qualitative syllogism possesses givens whose mediation lies outside it in one of its counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

As a whole, the sequence of qualitative syllogisms has transformed the character of mediation in inference. Instead of occurring through a single factor of the concept, taken in qualitative, immediate difference from the others, the mediation occurs through a concrete identity in which each term reflects its relations to the others.<sup>13</sup> No longer immediately given, the mediating term is now grounded upon mediation.<sup>14</sup> Namely, the particular that mediates the individual and universal is just as much mediated by their relation, and so forth.<sup>15</sup>

The type of syllogism that involves such mediation is characterized by Hegel as the syllogism of reflection. Its component elements exhibit the

relations of class membership that play themselves out in the quantitative judgments (judgments of reflection), in which predication applies to one, some or all members of a class. Although the same figures that order qualitative syllogisms envelop the syllogism of reflection, its constituent universal, particular and individual no longer are abstract and immediate, but reflect the mediation of class relationships. This mediation is not the self-mediation proper to self-determination because what mediates and what gets mediated remain distinct. It is instead the mediation occupying the logic of essence, where determinacy is determined by a determiner that it thereby reflects. Class relationships bring this reflection to the universal, particular and individual. The individual, as class member, reflects the class to which it belongs, possessing a particularity shared by every other member of the class. Relations of one, some or all members of a class always reflect the implications of the membership that underlies them. These implications, however, are limited in that class membership still leaves undetermined what particularities (subclasses) fall within a class, as well as what individuates members from one another. By contrast, with genus and species, the universal becomes more concrete, determining its own particularities (i.e. species), while leaving unspecified what individuates members of the same species.

As we shall see, the development underway progressively resolves the contradiction inherent in syllogism. This contradiction consists in the discrepancy between the middle term and the extremes it unites. So long as the middle term remains distinguished from the extremes, it cannot truthfully be the unity of them that is posited through it. The difference between middle term and extremes is most pronounced in the qualitative syllogism, where each term is still indifferent to the other. This difference now becomes diminished in the syllogism of reflection insofar as the terms reflect their mediation by one another. Because, however, class membership does not determine its particularities or what individuates its members, any syllogism involving it will still be plagued by an abiding difference between the unity posited by the syllogism and what mediates that unity. As Hegel points out, in order for the discrepancy to be overcome, the middle term must become the same totality that it mediates.<sup>16</sup> That, however, will remove the difference between middle term and extremes upon which the very form of inference depends. How this equalization can occur is what lies at stake in bringing the development of syllogism to closure.

### **The syllogism of reflection**

To legitimate the move to the syllogism of reflection, it is necessary to show why the mediation of universal, particular and individual emerging from qualitative syllogism involves class membership relations of quantitative judgments, rather than genus-species relations of judgments of necessity.

Hegel presents the immediate outcome of the qualitative syllogisms to be the syllogism of allness, where the mediating term between the individual and the universal is class membership. Class membership is particularity of a specific kind. Unlike the particularity of qualitative judgment, it is not an abstract quality that is otherwise unrelated to either the individual or the universal it connects. Instead, class membership relates all members to one another as well as to the same universal. In so doing, however, class membership is indifferent to the further individuation of its members, as well as to its own subgroupings. For this reason, the old saw, 'Socrates is a man; all men are mortal; Socrates is mortal' would be a misleading example of the syllogism of allness if being human here counted as a specification of a genus. In that case, genus would necessarily carry with it further commonalities comprising the specific differences necessary to that genus. By contrast, the universal to which class membership relates the individual leaves undetermined what other universals may also be shared by all members.

Although qualitative syllogism renders the individual, particular and universal mediated by one another as they alternately play the role of *medius terminus*, they still remain subject to substitution in each figure. Despite the fact that each mediates and is mediated in turn, they do not thereby fix which individual, particular and universal can operate in the inference in question. This abiding indifference is what distinguishes the mediation of class membership. Class is a universal whose own identity is dependent upon the given being of its members. One cannot derive from any prior specification of the class either the individual identities of its members or into what subgroupings they fall. When qualitative syllogism results in the individual united with the universal through a particular mediated by a universal mediated by the individual, without any term exclusively defined by those mediations, syllogism has transformed itself into an inference uniting the individual with the universal through class membership.

This inference is aptly called a syllogism of allness because the mediation it posits connects an individual with some universal through a major premise affirming that all members of a class have that universal and a minor premise affirming that an individual is a member of that class. The syllogism of allness fits under the same figure (*I-P-U*) as the first qualitative syllogism, but what must not be forgotten is that the particularity is here that of class membership.

This makes all the difference.<sup>17</sup> To begin with, the conclusion of the syllogism of allness is really presupposed by the major premise.<sup>18</sup> Because allness, or class membership, unlike genus, does not dictate any further determination of the individuals falling within it, any universal tied to class is connected by external happenstance.<sup>19</sup> That is, the relation of class membership to any universal is contingent upon what features its individual members may share. In the syllogism of allness, the conclusion (that the individual is united with a universal) is the only relation actually



affirming that an individual has some other universality. Yet, without this conclusion already being true, there can be no truth to the major premise, that all members of the class have the specified universal.<sup>20</sup> Hence, the individual stands in immediate, rather than a concluded relation to this predicate.<sup>21</sup>

For this reason, the syllogism of allness depends upon induction, the certification that all individuals grouped in a class happen to have the universal attributed to class membership. Since class membership does not itself entail that connection, the certification can only be obtained by observation of every individual belonging to the class. Expressed as a syllogism, this truth yields the syllogism of induction, according to which a specific shared feature is connected to class membership through the complete given array of its constituent individuals. Accordingly, the syllogism of induction falls under the second figure,  $U-I-P$ , with the crucial qualification that the particularity is that of class membership and the mediating individual is not singular, but the complete, immediately given array of individuals belonging to the class.<sup>22</sup> This expansion of the middle term can be expressed by the schema  $U-[I, I', I'' \dots]-P$ , according to which the major premise ascribes a universal to an immediately given array of individuals, the minor premise affirms the class membership of these individuals, and the conclusion connects the universal to class membership.

The universality ascribed to these individuals is not concrete, but still leaves undetermined which individuals it encompasses, just as class membership leaves undetermined which individuals exhaust its grouping. Consequently, a difference persists between the given array of individuals and the complete extension of class membership. In their immediacy, these individuals may all possess the universal and may all belong to the class, but that does not preclude other individuals from belonging to that class without sharing the universal nor from sharing the universal without belonging to that class. To take Hegel's example, the major premise may assert that a given array of substances are all metals, the minor premise may assert that all these substances conduct electricity, and the conclusion may affirm that all metals conduct electricity, but the two premises only establish that all metals so far observed conduct electricity.<sup>23</sup> The conclusion therefore depends upon an analogy presuming that because these class members have the universal, all class members have it as well. That is, because in respect of class membership, all members are like these that are given, they will be alike in another respect. By drawing its conclusion, the inference of induction is relying on this relationship.

Thereby the syllogism of induction has transformed itself into a syllogism of analogy. Mediation is no longer effected by just the given array of individuals. Instead, what connects the extremes is the basis of the analogy enabling individuals of a certain kind to share a certain property. This basis is a communality that is not indifferent to other features common to the



individuals it encompasses. Although syllogism now once more takes on the abstract schema  $I-U-P$ , the particular is here united with the individual in virtue of a universality beginning to exhibit the concrete connection of genus and species, where a kind, unlike a class, entails further groupings.<sup>24</sup> This is just a beginning, however, because the premises of the syllogism of analogy are the immediate connection between an individual, its class, and some feature (to take Hegel's example, 'Earth is a heavenly body and is inhabited') and the immediate connection of another individual and that class ('the Moon is a heavenly body'), from which is concluded the connection of the latter individual and that feature ('the Moon is inhabited').<sup>25</sup> The relation between the class and the universal remains conditioned by the immediate being of the individual or individuals in which that connection is given. That immediate being may possess features not shared by all individuals of the class, which is why results can be concluded that may not be the case ('the Moon is inhabited'). If the conclusion is valid, it is because the individual to whom the universal is inferred by analogy happens to have the right property. This signifies that the conclusion is conditioned by the constitution of that individual as well, a constitution that remains immediately given and external to both the class and its other members.

Nonetheless, the syllogism of analogy just as much undermines that externality by concluding something it must presuppose.<sup>26</sup> The conclusion, that the individual has a particularity ascribed it through analogy ('the Moon, being heavenly body, is inhabited'), is identical in form to the premise ('the Earth, a heavenly body, is inhabited') in which the individual has the same particularity. In both cases, the given constitution of the individual is what links it to that particularity and to the universal to which it belongs. Unless the individuals *are* connected to the particular and universal through their own constitution, the syllogism cannot infer what it infers. With the positing of this connection, however, the universal to which the individuals belong ceases to be a class. No longer is this universality afflicted with subjective connection, as manifest in how class membership remains external to both individual identity and particular subgroupings. Instead, the universal figures as an objective universality,<sup>27</sup> necessarily linked to the constitution of the individuals falling under it. In the syllogisms of reflection, inference depended upon the immediate givenness of the individual, setting them generally under the schema  $P-I-U$ . With the objective universal now binding individual and particular together, syllogism becomes reconfigured under the schema  $I-U-P$ .<sup>28</sup> Inference has transformed itself into the syllogism of necessity, uniting the individual with the particular through a universal that is not indifferent to the particularity giving the individual its constitution. This universal is the genus and individuals belonging to that universal are necessarily, objectively bound to the particular inherent in the genus.

## The syllogism of necessity

Hegel introduces the syllogism of necessity as a categorical syllogism because it has the categorical judgment as one or both of its premises.<sup>29</sup> The categorical judgment immediately asserts the unity of an individual species with its genus (e.g. 'gold is a metal'). Although the syllogism of necessity links the individual and the particular through the mediation of the universal, each part of this mediated connection consists of an immediate connection, as provided by judgment. Since the mediating term is the genus, the premises from which the conclusion is drawn each involve immediate connections to the genus. The individual is immediately connected to the genus by having a nature – a species being. This is what the categorical judgment asserts. The other premise unites the genus with some particularity. Since this particularity is not indifferent to the universal, but objectively entailed by it, this particularity is a species being necessary to the genus. Accordingly, the assertion of their connection is categorical. The inferred connection between individual and particular shares in this necessity, and for this reason, Hegel can duly identify the syllogism of necessity as being, in the first instance, the categorical syllogism.

Although the categorical syllogism falls under the same schema, *I-P-U*, as the first qualitative syllogism, the type of individuality, particularity and universality at stake precludes the accidentality allowing for multiple substitutions. Because the middle term is the genus, essentially linked to the individual through its constitution, that constitution does not lead to other mediating factors through which other conclusions can be drawn. The constitution of the individual is its species being and this is inherent in the genus. Similarly, because the other extreme figures in the inference by having a specific difference of the genus, rather than some extraneous quality, the middle term does not entail indefinitely multiple conclusions.<sup>30</sup> The same concrete nature pervades all three termini, whose distinction as individual, universal and particular merely presents it in alternate forms.<sup>31</sup> The individual possesses a species being uniting it with the genus, The genus contains specific differences through which individuals have their nature, and the particular is specific to the genus and thereby tied to the individuals of that kind. Because each termini contains its linkage with its counterparts, there is no need to prove the premises, generating the infinite regress that plagues qualitative inference. Far from resting on subjective associations in need of an account,<sup>32</sup> the termini of categorical syllogism involve objective connections, built into their own content.

Aristotle, who, like Plato, privileges the universality of genus and the hierarchical knowledge of genus-species it makes possible, not surprisingly points to substance as the basis for syllogism.<sup>33</sup> As Hegel observes, the categorical syllogism, like categorical judgment, encloses substance relations in the concept determinations of universal, particular and individual.<sup>34</sup>

Insofar as Aristotle and Plato conceive substance to involve a form/matter relationship rendering each substance an individual of a kind (genus), they can regard the reality ultimately consisting of substance to be eminently knowable through syllogisms of necessity. As we have seen, this provides knowledge with an objectivity surpassing what either qualitative syllogisms containing abstract universals or syllogisms of reflection involving class membership furnish. Nevertheless, syllogisms of necessity remain tainted by a limitation that calls into question their adequacy for philosophical cognition.

The problem is that not everything about the termini of syllogisms of necessity is determined by their unification through the genus. The individual may have a nature by which its genus ties it to some specific difference, but what individuates the individual remains external to the genus-species relationship. The genus may be inherently differentiated into its species, but the nature of the genus does not provide the identity distinguishing each individual from any other of the same kind. This indifference to the individuation of individuals comprises an abiding subjective element in the categorical syllogism. Although each member of the genus is objectively connected to it, the exclusive identity of each member remains subjective, being extraneously given. For this reason, when any categorical syllogism is concluded, the identity of the individual must be supplied by the subject who formulates the syllogism, irrespective of the content of the genus and its species.

The same deficit that led from categorical to hypothetical judgment now transforms categorical syllogism into hypothetical syllogism. The subjective character of the individual in categorical judgment left the existence of the individual hypothetically conditioned, reflecting the necessity of the genus-species relation and the accidentality of the individual. With its characteristic formula (if *A* then *B*), hypothetical judgment necessarily links two individuals, while making the being of one depend upon another, whose own existence remains contingent. Similarly, the extraneous character of individuation in categorical syllogism renders the connection between individual and specific difference contingent upon the being of another, while retaining the objectivity of the genus-species connection. The genus' indifference to individuation allows indeterminately many other individuals to be pervaded by its nature, but it leaves its subsumption of *this* individual in the syllogism something accidental and therefore contingent upon another.<sup>35</sup> That other, as individual, is equally indifferent to the genus to which it is connected. Accordingly, this extreme is afflicted with the same contingency it extends to the subject whose generic character it mediates.

Schematically, hypothetical syllogism takes the familiar shape: if *A*, then *B*; *A* is; thus *B* is. In this way, the necessity of the terms' relation (if *A*, then *B*) is presented apart from their immediate being (*A* is, *B* is). So expressed,

the inference abstracts from both the general determinacies of the concept (universal, particular and individual) and the particular form that these factors have in genus-species relations. Nonetheless, given from where and how hypothetical syllogism arises, it still retains genus/species relations. The individuals are not simply abstract; they each instead have a generic nature and differences specific to it. The necessity of their relation depends upon these connections of the objective universality pervading them. That is, although the being of one is dependent upon the contingent being of the other, this dependency is grounded in what kind of an entity they each are.

Commonly, hypothetical syllogism is taken as an inference of cause and effect, since cause and effect are both contingent, yet linked by necessity. Causality, understood as efficient, abstracts from formal causality and thereby conforms to a law indifferent to the kind of factors subject to it. Such causality pertains to the material being of factors, in abstraction from what they are. Accordingly, causal necessity of this sort involves laws of matter. Because such law is completely indifferent to what it governs, it does not involve universality, particularity, and individuality. This is why Hegel addresses law and causality in the logic of essence. There law comprises an essential regularity whose appearance retains a phenomenal indifference categorically distinct from the relation of universal, particular and individual, each of whose content is just as essential as that of their conceptual counterparts. For this very reason, cause posits its effect without relating to it as universal, particular, or individual.

Although hypothetical syllogism does share with causal relationship the contingency of its extremes and the necessity of their connection, the extremes are factors of a kind, connected through their genus. By positing this connection as hypothetical and concluding the contingent existence of certain individuals, the syllogism presents the generic individuals in two aspects. On the one hand, because of their contingent existence, these individuals do not exhaust the extension of the genus. The syllogism posits *their* related existence and not that of other members of the genus. On the other hand, because their being is contingent, the hypothetical syllogism could just as well posit the linked existence of any other members of the genus.

Taken together, these features signify that while the genus is either this individual or any of the others comprising its exhaustive particularization, insofar as the genus gains existence in the contingent being of certain individuals it thereby does not exist as the others. The hypothetical syllogism has thus transformed itself into the disjunctive syllogism, whose abstract formula is presented by Hegel in two alternate forms: (1) *A is either B or C or D; A is B; thus A is not C nor D; and also (2) A is either B or C or D; A is not C nor D; thus B is.*<sup>36</sup> Because what mediates the conclusion is the universal in the disjunctive array of its contingent particularization, Hegel

places the disjunctive syllogism under the scheme  $I-U-P$  <sup>37</sup> whereby it becomes reformulated as (1)  $A$  is  $B$ ;  $A$  is either  $B$  or  $C$  or  $D$ ;  $A$  is not  $C$  nor  $D$ ; and (2)  $A$  is not  $C$  nor  $D$ ;  $A$  is either  $B$  or  $C$  or  $D$ ; thus  $B$  is. The different ordering is really of no consequence, for the disjunctive syllogism reaches the same conclusion whatever sequence is followed.

Given how it emerges, the disjunctive syllogism must no more be reduced to its formal scheme than any of the other syllogisms of necessity. Following the familiar sequence of Hegel's first formulation ( $A$  is either  $B$  or  $C$  or  $D$ ;  $A$  is  $B$ ; thus  $A$  is not  $C$  nor  $D$ ), the first premise ( $A$  is  $B$  or  $C$  or  $D$  ...) determines the genus in its exhaustive development, and in so doing, contains both the universal of the genus, the species that are necessary to it, and the contingency of the individuals in which it consists. The middle term ( $A$  is  $B$ ) is not just a single individual without further qualification. Rather, the middle term consists in whatever individuals happen to comprise the genus, individuals that bear the specific differences inherent in the genus. The conclusion ( $A$  is not  $C$  nor  $D$ ) expresses the exclusive individuality of the given members of the genus, negating those individuals who happen not to exist. Considered in isolation, the three terms of the disjunctive syllogism appear to be different in content. The disjunction of the genus in the major premise appears to contain more than the array of individuals given in the middle term and those denied in the conclusion. Yet, through its own inferring, disjunctive syllogism determines the genus to consist of just those individuals contingently given in the middle term, who are just those not excluded by the conclusion. Although the disjunctive syllogism operates on the basis of a distinction between its three terms, without which no inferring can proceed, the mediation it effects renders all termini equivalent. Each consists in the same exhaustive determination of the same genus. Thereby, what mediates can no longer be distinguished from what is mediated.

### **Why there is no syllogism of the concept**

Hegel, as we have noted, does not take this outcome to signal a transformation of the disjunctive syllogism into a syllogism of the concept paralleling the transformation of disjunctive judgment into the judgment of the concept. To understand why Hegel is correct in not introducing any more forms of syllogism, one need only compare the outcome of disjunctive judgment with that of disjunctive syllogism.

The key difference resides in the fact that judgment, unlike syllogism, *immediately* unites its terms, subject and predicate. Through the copula 'is,' disjunctive judgment immediately connects the universal with its exhaustive particularization. This renders both subject and predicate identical in content, but not identical with what mediates them, the immediate connection of the copula. The subject is now determined to be a unity of the universal

and its complete particularization, but it remains related to this unity immediately, by the copula of judgment. Hence, what results from the disjunctive judgment is another judgment in which the subject is affirmed to be immediately at one with the unity of the universal and its exhaustive specialization. This comprises the assertoric judgment of the concept, in which the individual is held to be a unity of the universal and the particular. Because judgments of the concept predicate of the subject the correspondence of its particularity and universality, they have a distinctly normative character.

By contrast, the disjunctive syllogism mediates the universal of the genus with its particularization through an individuality that has the same content as the genus and its particularization. In order for this outcome to generate another form of syllogism, there must remain some difference between the extremes and their mediation. This difference is required in order for any inference to operate. Yet the disjunctive syllogism removes that very distinction.

This development might seem to be nothing new, for the 'mathematical' syllogism already apparently removed such difference by connecting terms through their numerical equivalence. The mathematical syllogism, however, only represents one aspect of the outcome of qualitative syllogism, since the transitivity it certifies entirely abstracts from the factors of the concept (universal, particular and individual) logically constitutive of syllogism. Instead of comprising a bona fide type of syllogism, the mathematical inference serves to introduce the syllogism of reflection by exhibiting how the termini are members of a class whose membership is indifferent to their individuation.

By contrast, disjunctive syllogism retains the elements of universal, particular and individual, while rendering the formally distinguishable major premise, minor premise, and conclusion identical in content. Syllogism, however, can only persevere by maintaining the formalism and subjectivity lying in the distinction between the extremes and that which mediates them. This distinction involves formalism and subjectivity because it leaves some content unaccounted for by the mediation of the inference.<sup>38</sup> Insofar as what gets unified has determinations indifferent to its unification, the concluding retains a formal subjective character. With elements undetermined by the inference, syllogism has a form external to its content. Instead of being objective to the inference, this extraneous material must be independently given, as by some subject who stipulates the content about which inference is to be made.

Through the working of disjunctive syllogism, however, the extremes and middle term are posited to be the very same unity of universal, particular and individual. Because the identity of content is not present at the outset, but is effected through the inference, disjunctive syllogism does begin as a bona fide syllogism. Through disjunctive syllogism's own mediation, however, the difference with which it starts is eliminated.

Because this mediation establishes its own identity with its extremes, it ends up leaving nothing unaccounted for. The relation between universal, particular and excluding individual has turned out to be contained within each termini, for each has been determined to be the universal in its exhaustive particularization.

### **From syllogism to objectivity**

Hegel points out that the transition from subjectivity to objectivity is achieved when the middle term in syllogism is occupied by all three elements of the concept.<sup>39</sup> In qualitative syllogism, the middle term was occupied by particularity, individuality and universality, but only in succession in the three different forms (*I-P-U*, *U-I-P*, *P-U-I*). In the syllogism of reflection, the middle term encompassed the extremes, but in a manner that retained its externality to them.<sup>40</sup> The syllogisms of allness, induction and analogy all contained the individual and the particular under a generality that remained burdened by contingency, leaving some discrepancy between the universal and the factors it embraced. Only with the culmination of the syllogisms of necessity does the middle term contain universality, particularity and individuality in the same way in which its extremes do. When this occurs, the mediation has become the totality of syllogism, which constitutively mediates two terms of the concept by the third. In disjunctive syllogism, the mediation becomes the totality in conjunction with each extreme becoming identical to that mediation as well. Hence, through disjunctive syllogism, each term is a totality, uniting universality, particularity and individuality and mediated by itself.<sup>41</sup> This result warrants the label, 'objectivity,' for both negative and positive reasons.

On the one hand, the totalities that have emerged have nullified anything formal and subjective about their determination. No longer is anything in their relation to factors of the concept indifferent to that relation. What is mediated has become completely identical with the process of mediation. By the same token, the determination of the erstwhile terms of syllogism has ceased to have any subjective character, in the sense of possessing an extraneous givenness that must originate elsewhere.

Positively speaking, this exclusion of formality and subjectivity consists in the achievement of a totality that is completely self-mediated, despite its relation to other similarly self-mediated totalities. Objectivity can be seen to have this character in light of how it stands distinguished from being, determinacy and existence. Being is completely indeterminate, given how any specification would fall into the incoherence of characterizing being in terms of some determinate being. Any determinate being owes its determinacy to its contrast with what it is not, whereas existence involves things that are determined by one another. By contrast, objectivity is not relative to anything else, but determined in and through itself, exhibiting



the independent character that requires universality, particularity and individuality for its specification.

These factors of the concept are constitutive of the independence defining objectivity because self-determination minimally consists of universality, particularity and individuality. The concept logically emerges when reciprocity eliminates the difference between determiner and determined that defines the two-tiered categories of the logic of essence. When determiner and determined become equivalent, determinacy is self-determined. Universality comprises the unity of what is self-determined in that it pervades its differentiations, whose particularity enables the universal to be at one with its differentiation, engendering individuality, determinacy that is determined in and through itself.<sup>42</sup> Although the concept involves individuality, it has not posited its own initial identity of determiner and determined. The concept *is* self-determination, but its very emergence from the logic of essence leaves it with an immediacy giving it a subjective character. This subjectivity gets progressively diminished through judgment and syllogism, where the elements of the concept, universality, particularity and individuality, become determined by one another. Objectivity is arrived at when what gets determined by the elements of the concept is no different from the process determining them.

Consequently, objectivity is eminently conceptualizable, though not through syllogism. Syllogism may pave the way for categorizing objectivity, but only by undermining the defining process of inference. This process consists in setting conceptual factors in a mediation that leaves some extraneously given content unaccounted for. Because objectivity is a self-mediated totality, conceiving objectivity requires overcoming the appeal to givenness that always encumbers inference.

## Notes

1. Richard Dien Winfield, 'The Types of Universals and the Forms of Judgment' (chapter 8 of this volume).
2. 8 G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke: Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften I*, § 184, at 336 (1970) [hereinafter cited as *W*]; Georg W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic* § 184, at 248 (William Wallace trans., 1975) [hereinafter cited as *EL*].
3. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Die Lehre vom Begriff* 674 (1994) (1816 edition) [hereinafter cited as 1816 *Logik*]; G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*].
4. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, §182 Remark, at 333; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 182, at 246.
5. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, §182 Remark, at 333; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 182, at 246.
6. Accordingly, Hegel further labels the syllogism of determinate being the syllogism of mere perception, whose accidental connections contrast with those of the syllogism of induction, which Hegel labels the syllogism of experience, insofar as it subjectively combines individuals into a class, which is then concluded with some universal because that universal is found in every individual. See 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 134; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 690.



7. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 117; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 675.
8. As Hegel points out, insofar as this mathematical syllogism arises from the transformations of the qualitative syllogism, it is not an unprovable axiom, as mathematics commonly presumes, but a mediated result of other logical relations. See 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, §188 Addition, at 340; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 188, at 251.
9. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 121–2; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 679.
10. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 116; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 675.
11. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 120; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 678.
12. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 120; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 678.
13. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 124; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 681.
14. Such mediation, Hegel here observes, is the mediation of reflection. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 123; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 681.
15. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, § 189, at 340; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 189, at 251–2.
16. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 127; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 684.
17. Since, as Hegel notes, the middle term specifically defines syllogism and differentiates it from judgment, 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 103; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 663, its content must least of all be ignored.
18. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, §190 Remark, at 341; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 252.
19. As Hegel points out, the form of allness (class membership), encompasses the individual only externally, which means, conversely, that the individual retains an immediate givenness not reflecting the universality of class. See 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 131, *supra* note 3, at 687.
20. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, § 190 Remark, at 342; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 253; 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 132; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 688.
21. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 132; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 688.
22. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 133; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 689.
23. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, § 190 Remark, at 34233; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 25346.
24. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 136L, *supra* note 3, at 692.
25. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, § 190 Remark, at 343; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 254.
26. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 138; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 694.
27. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 138; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 694.
28. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 343; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 190, at 246; 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 139; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 695.
29. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 140; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 696.
30. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 141–2; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 697.
31. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 142; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 697.
32. As Hegel points out, the subjective aspect of syllogism consists in the indifference of the extremes with respect to the middle term that mediates their unity. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 142; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 698. This is most pronounced in qualitative syllogism, but, persists to lesser extent through the syllogisms of necessity until all remaining difference between extremes and medius terminus is eliminated. That elimination frees the factors of the concept from any abiding subjectivity and signals the passage into objectivity.
33. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 121 (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Hippocrates G. Apostle trans., 1979) (Bk. Zeta, Ch. 9, 1034 l. a33–5).
34. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 141; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 696.
35. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 142; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 698.
36. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 147; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 701–2.
37. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 146; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 701.
38. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 148; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 703.

39. 8 *W*, *supra* note 2, §181 Addition, at 332; *EL*, *supra* note 2, § 181 Addition, at 245.
40. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 148; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 703.
41. 1816 *Logik*, *supra* note 3, at 148; *SL*, *supra* note 3, at 703.
42. For a detailed examination of how this is so, see Richard Dien Winfield, *Autonomy and Normativity: Investigations of Truth, Right and Beauty* 42–53 (2001); Richard Dien Winfield, 'Concept, Individuality and Truth,' 1999 *Bull. of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 35–46; Richard Dien Winfield, 'From Concept To Judgment: Rethinking Hegel's Overcoming of Formal Logic,' 20 *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 53 (2001).

# 11

## Hegel's Refutation of Rational Egoism, in True Infinity and the Idea

Robert M. Wallace

In the history of moral and political philosophy, the apparent rationality of egoism – of a lack of interest in the needs and the rights of other individuals, as such – is a challenge to which major thinkers feel called upon to respond. Plato does so at length in the *Republic* and the *Symposium*, Aristotle does so in his account of 'friendship' (*philia*), in his *Ethics*, Hobbes does so in his response to the so-called 'fool,' in chapter 15 of *Leviathan*, and Kant does so in his argument, in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and elsewhere, that autonomy can only take the form of being guided by morality's Categorical Imperative. I am going to suggest in this chapter that *Hegel's* response to the challenge of rational egoism extends throughout his philosophical system, beginning in his treatment of 'atomism' in the *Logic's* Doctrine of Being, continuing through his treatments of 'reflection' and 'diversity' in the Doctrine of Essence, and of Objectivity, Life, and Cognition, in the Doctrine of the Concept, and concluding in his famous account of Master and Bondsman and mutual recognition, in the *Encyclopedia's* *Philosophy of Spirit* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The portion of Hegel's treatment of rational egoism that occurs within the Logic of the Subject (the Doctrine of the Concept) – namely, his account of Objectivity, Life, and Cognition – is extremely rich in its implications for this issue, implications which have not been appreciated in the commentaries with which I am familiar. And second, when one realizes that Hegel is in fact treating this issue in a systematic way throughout the *Logic* (as well as the *Encyclopedia*), this puts the *Logic* – and its culminating glory, the Doctrine of the Concept – in a whole new light. Among the numerous ways in which the *Logic's* importance is still only beginning to become clear to us – others of which are, for example, its importance for theology and for the relation between nature and freedom – this is certainly a significant one.<sup>1</sup>

It may seem odd to suggest that Hegel offers an *argument* against rational egoism, since he is often described as simply denying that a position like egoism is even *possible*. Hegel is said to maintain that human individuals simply are creatures of their social environment, to such an extent that it is

just not logically possible for one individual to declare herself independent and adopt a purely exploitative attitude toward the people around her. However, the passages in which Hegel describes and diagnoses the origin of 'evil' – as (for example) 'the *supreme, most stubborn* error, which takes itself for the highest truth, appearing in more concrete forms as abstract freedom, pure ego and ... as evil'<sup>2</sup> – make it sufficiently clear that Hegel does not regard egoism as *obviously* senseless and requiring no detailed refutation. I aim to show that a great deal of what he writes, in the *Logic* and the *Encyclopedia*, can be interpreted as just such a detailed refutation.

### The need for 'recognition'

Hegel's best-known treatment of what seems like a version of rational egoism is in his account of 'mutual recognition' and the Master and the Bondsman, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, in which he argues that the Master's need for recognition of his freedom is not satisfied by the Bondsman's obedience, since the Master is 'still far from seeing *himself* in the other,'<sup>3</sup> and the Master cannot value 'recognition' of his freedom that's awarded by someone in whom he does not himself see a capacity for freedom. From this, Hegel concludes that both Master and Bondsman must 'know themselves affirmatively in the other self' and consequently participate in the 'mutuality' of family, fatherland, state, and so forth.<sup>4</sup> But why does the Master *need* his freedom to be 'recognized' by anyone else, in the first place, and why is this need – the 'drive ... to be *present* [*da zu sein*] for the other as a free self'<sup>5</sup> – strong enough to override self-centered interests that might otherwise tempt him to trample on family, fatherland, etc.?

To explain why the Master has this need for recognition, I am going to go back, first of all, all the way to the 'Quality' chapter of the *Logic*, in which I think the pattern that's at work here is ultimately rooted – and this will then lead me to the *Logic*'s account of Objectivity, Life, and the Idea, in which Hegel first spells out conclusions that are very similar to the ones that he's drawing here, in the *Philosophy of Spirit*.<sup>6</sup>

### Reality, negativity, and true infinity

The concept that Hegel introduces in 'Quality' which pervades his later work to such an extent that he calls it the 'fundamental concept of philosophy,'<sup>7</sup> is 'true infinity.' To understand true infinity we must understand its relation to what Hegel calls 'reality' and to what he calls 'negation.' 'Reality' refers to the aspect of a determinate quality that is immediate or in the form of being.<sup>8</sup> 'Negation,' on the other hand, is the respect in which the determinate quality is 'mediated': the interrelation between this quality and other qualities of the same type. For example, the quality, red, is a

color; it can be determined – that is, specified – only through its relation to other colors that it is *not*: it is the color that is not-blue, not-green, and so forth. This is the sense in which, as Hegel puts it, *omnis determinatio est negatio*: all determination depends upon negation.<sup>9</sup> But this notion of ‘negation’ is by no means the end of the discussion of quality, because we have not yet done justice to quality’s ‘immediacy,’ which Hegel called its ‘reality.’ Hegel’s first attempt to do justice to quality’s immediacy is the ‘something,’ which he describes as the negation of the first negation,<sup>10</sup> or ‘negativity,’ for short. Negativity makes something (as Hegel puts it later) ‘self-related in *opposition* to its relation to other.’<sup>11</sup> Hegel actually identifies this self-related ‘something’ as ‘the beginning of the *subject*,’ which will later emerge as ‘being-for-self,’ the ‘Concept,’ and so forth.<sup>12</sup> However, there are problems with this ‘something.’ Its ‘being-in-itself’ – its self-relatedness in opposition to its relation to others – should, Hegel says, be ‘in it’ or ‘posited’;<sup>13</sup> that is, it too should be a quality, a concrete feature of the object. If it is a quality, it must (once again) be a ‘being-for-other’: an interrelationship with other qualities; but in that case the something is no longer *opposed* to all relation to other.<sup>14</sup> To avoid this problem, Hegel reformulates the something as ‘finitude.’ The ‘limit’ that makes finite somethings finite is meant to keep the being of each finite something separate from the being of others;<sup>15</sup> but this limit itself becomes yet another ‘other,’ for the something,<sup>16</sup> so that the something is still determined by a being-for-other, a negation, and thus is still not an immediate reality.

To solve this problem, Hegel introduces the notion of the ‘ought,’ the *Sollen*, by which the something ‘goes beyond itself.’<sup>17</sup> The ‘ought’ is supposed to enable the something not to be limited and determined (through negation) by other somethings, or by a limit (which is other than it), but instead to be determined only by itself. When the Kantian rational being overcomes its ‘inclinations’ and obeys its ‘ought’ and its reason, its determination takes place *within* the being, rather than between it and something that’s other than it. The rational being determines itself: it has its quality by virtue of itself, rather than through its relations to others. In this sense, this being seems to be the first truly immediate ‘reality’; it seems to solve the problem of the relation between reality and negation.

This solution works, of course, only if the ‘ought’ itself is not another finite thing. If it were another finite thing, the ‘ought’ would simply make the finite something into yet another ‘being-for-other.’ So the ‘ought’ must be infinite. But Hegel argues that the ‘ought’ as *Kant* pictures it is, in fact, ultimately finite, insofar as it is simply opposed to the inclinations and to finitude in general, and consequently it is *limited and rendered finite* by those inclinations and that finitude. The conclusion that Hegel draws is that the ‘ought’ must be replaced by a ‘*true infinity*,’ which is not something that exists independently (in which case it would be limited and rendered finite by other independently existing things), but instead ‘*is only as a going*

beyond the finite.<sup>18</sup> 'The finite is not superseded by the infinite as by a power existing outside it; rather, its infinity consists in superseding *its own self*.'<sup>19</sup> But just as the infinite is not a 'power existing outside' this process, so also the *finite* is not something that exists independently of the process, as the whole argument that we have just been considering makes clear; the finite has to supersede itself, because it is 'only as going beyond itself'<sup>20</sup> that it is a *reality*. So this single 'going beyond' – by the finite, of itself – which constitutes the reality of the finite *and* of the infinite, is the 'unity' of the finite and the infinite,<sup>21</sup> through which the duality of Kant's two worlds or two standpoints is overcome, *without eliminating* either world or either standpoint. The finite, phenomenal world remains, although it achieves reality only by going beyond itself; and the infinite, noumenal world remains, although it is identified with this transcendence, by the finite, of itself. What is eliminated, of course, is the 'spuriously infinite' *opposition*, the supposed incompatibility, between the finite and the infinite, the phenomenal and the noumenal (which made this supposed 'infinite' actually finite). When the resulting unitary, true infinity is identified with *freedom*<sup>22</sup> – because going beyond finitude evidently involves freedom – the reality of infinite freedom is also defended against the objection, which is raised by naturalism and empiricism against Kant (and endorsed by Hegel in the *Encyclopedia Logic*<sup>23</sup>), that there cannot be two 'realities' that have no intelligible connection with each other. In Hegel's picture, there is only one reality, the true infinity, which includes the finite because it is the finite's going beyond itself. It is by going beyond themselves that finitude and nature (the realm of the finite) become real. What is actual, true, and perceptible, must be real; only true infinity is real; so empiricism should admit that it is only this infinity and its freedom, and not finite things as such (that is, as not going beyond themselves), that are actual, true, and perceptible.<sup>24</sup>

Through this argument, Hegel shows how *the idea of transcendence* – of freedom's 'going beyond' finite natural inclinations – *need not lead (as it does for Kant) to a doctrine of two opposed and incompatible worlds or points of view*, if the 'going beyond' is understood as achieving a reality that the finite, as such, fails to achieve, and in that sense as *unifying* the finite *with* itself, rather than dividing it from itself. The resulting 'identity in difference' between the finite and the infinite – the finite achieving its reality by going beyond itself in the infinite, and the infinite existing as the finite's going beyond itself – is Hegel's formula not only for the relation of freedom to nature but also for the relation of God to the world, of Spirit to Nature, etc.

## Multiplicity as negativity: essence

This identity in difference is also Hegel's formula for the relation of reality to its multiplicity – as in multiple Self-consciousnesses, and multiple human

beings – which will be crucial for his response to the challenge constituted by the apparent rationality of egoism. This multiplicity first enters the *Logic* when being-for-self (which embodied true infinity) ‘collapses’<sup>25</sup> into the multiple ‘ones’ of ‘atomism.’ After these have been homogenized as ‘quantity,’ and then reformulated as the unity of quantity and quality in ‘measure’ – neither of which manages to be fully ‘specific,’ fully determinate – we are left with a hypothetical ‘inner specifying unity,’<sup>26</sup> in which we abandon the ‘immediacy’ of Being in favor of the ‘inwardization’ (*Erinnerung*) of ‘essence.’ And this inwardization turns out<sup>27</sup> to be a new form of the ‘negativity’ – the ‘negation of the negation’ – that Hegel had initially identified as the ‘beginning of the *subject*.’<sup>28</sup> Thus, at the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence we are already (or, again) confronted with the ‘subject’ that will later, as it were, ‘officially’ emerge from Substance into the fully-fledged ‘Subjective Logic’ (the Doctrine of the Concept).

The place where something like multiplicity next emerges is when essence becomes ‘reflection’ and reflection takes the form, in the second instance, of ‘external reflection.’ The first form of reflection, ‘*positing* reflection,’ has to supersede itself because as essence it cannot create an ‘other’ that will stand over against itself, on pain of falling back into Being’s pattern of transition into the ‘other.’ So in order to supersede its ‘positing,’ the activity by which it (as essence) thought of itself as creating the immediate,<sup>29</sup> it thinks of itself instead as ‘presupposing’ (*voraussetzen*, literally ‘positing in advance’): positing the immediate as something completely independent of itself and not needing to be posited. This creates what Hegel calls ‘external reflection,’ in which the terms of the relationship are mutually external and independent. But external reflection fails to establish something that’s independent of negativity and reflection, because the act of declaring that something does not get its character through negation – which is what ‘positing in advance’ declares about its object, in declaring that its object doesn’t depend upon it in any way—is itself precisely what *Essence* does, in order to get beyond Being’s characteristic pattern of ‘transition’ (mutual dependence) between one quality and another.<sup>30</sup> So ‘positing in advance’ is still essence, reflection, and thus positing, and its attempt at ‘externality’ fails to *achieve* externality. So the third and final type of reflection, ‘*determining* reflection,’ combines the mutual independence that’s implied by external reflection, with the internality that’s implied by positing reflection: it subsumes the relative independence or externality of the two terms within a totality in which they are not external to each other.

The chapter on the ‘Reflection-Determinations,’ which follows the chapter on ‘Reflection,’ exhibits a very similar development. ‘Identity,’ which represents Essence understood as ‘determining reflection,’ gives way to ‘difference’ and especially to ‘diversity’ (*Verschiedenheit*) – ‘reflection that has become *external to itself*’<sup>31</sup> – which, like ‘positing in advance,’ represents the sheer mutual indifference that common sense ascribes to the multiple

aspects of reality. But because 'diversity' emerges *from* 'reflection,' its internal issues are interpreted in the light of that background, and it develops into 'contradiction' and 'ground,' which (like 'reflection') do *not* correspond to the common-sense view of reality. This pattern of argument occurs again and again in the rest of the *Logic* and the *Encyclopedia*. Hegel first recognizes a type of mutual independence such as is imputed to items in the world by common sense or the 'understanding,' and then criticizes it and supersedes it within a wider totality within which the terms are only relatively, but not ultimately, independent. But his critique and supersession depend, in each case, on prior concepts – in this case, on the concepts of essence and reflection – whose authority can and must ultimately be traced back to negativity and true infinity. The *crucial* critique of common sense and the 'understanding' is the one that generated negativity and true infinity in the first place, and these later critiques all depend upon that earlier one (and extend it into new territory).

### **Multiplicity as negativity: the concept's objectivity**

The next instance of this type of critique and supersession that I want to consider is the extended one that Hegel directs, in the Doctrine of the Concept, at what he calls 'Mechanism.' The Concept itself is clearly a successor of true infinity. When Hegel writes that in the Concept,

the universal in its other is tranquil and *with itself*. We have called it free power, but it could also be called *free love* and *limitationless blessedness* [*schrackenlose Seligkeit*], because it bears itself toward what is different from it as toward itself; in it, it has returned to itself ... ,<sup>32</sup>

the idea that 'the universal in its other is tranquil and *with itself*,' and that it has 'returned to itself' in what is different from it, is strongly reminiscent of the way in which the infinite, in true infinity, is not the negation or the polar opposite of the finite (its 'other'), but rather it is the finite's self-surpassing, so that the true infinite could quite appropriately be said to be 'with itself' (or 'at home') in the finite. However, the Concept's unfolding in Judgment and Syllogism initially produces something – what Hegel calls 'Objectivity' – in which this harmonious theological pattern is not immediately evident. 'First, ... Objectivity is an immediacy whose moments ... exist in a self-subsistent indifference as *objects outside one another*.'<sup>33</sup> These are the mutually indifferent objects of mechanistic materialism. Hegel soon begins to find patterns whereby such objects in, for example, solar systems, or in the chemical interaction of substances, can be increasingly *centered* or *systematically integrated* with each other, so that the behavior of items within these systems can be understood by reference to the center or to the system as a whole, rather than solely in terms of 'thrust and pressure.'<sup>34</sup>



From these patterns he progresses to the 'inner *teleology*' that Kant treats as an 'as if,' but which Hegel views as 'the true that is in and for itself.'<sup>35</sup>

It is difficult to imagine a materialist finding Hegel's arguments in the 'Objectivity' section, *taken by itself*, at all difficult to resist. But the crucial thing to realize is that the section – like the argument about 'external reflection' – is not *meant* to be taken by itself. Hegel in fact introduces Objectivity as 'a *matter* [*Sache*] that is *in and for itself*.'<sup>36</sup> In order to live up to this definition, Objectivity has to be not only unconditioned, like a 'matter (*Sache*)' – and 'in itself,' like 'reality' – but *also* 'for itself,' like true infinity. That is, it has to be the self-surpassing of the finite! So what Hegel is doing in his detailed discussion of Mechanism, Chemism, and Teleology, is simply detailing ways in which material systems (not *must*, but) *can* be seen as surpassing themselves, toward something infinite – because he knows already, from the introduction of the Concept<sup>37</sup> and from the introduction, before it, of Essence,<sup>38</sup> that everything that he will discuss thereafter must in some fashion be 'for itself' as well as 'in itself,' and must therefore go beyond the finite descriptions that the Understanding will apply to it. So again the argument depends upon and extends the initial critique of the Understanding that produced true infinity and being-for-self, in the first place.

### **Multiplicity as negativity: the idea's life and cognition**

From teleology Hegel proceeds to the Idea, which, being explicitly teleological, embodies the Concept's negativity and being-for-self.<sup>39</sup> The form that these initially take is Life, in which the Concept 'pervades its Objectivity.'<sup>40</sup> In Life, Hegel once again will acknowledge the multiplicity of which common sense is so fond. But as in 'atomism,' 'external reflection,' and Mechanism, his *way* of acknowledging this multiplicity – his way of introducing it, and the status that it therefore achieves (and *does not* achieve) – will again make all the difference. It won't achieve the status of an *ultimate, original* multiplicity, because it comes into being as a way of thinking about how being or reality could be self-sufficient and self-determining (not dependent, in the manner of 'negation,' on something else to make it what it is). If this issue – how being or reality could be self-sufficient and self-determining – is the primary issue that thought must address, then multiplicity simply isn't primary for thought; multiplicity must be satisfied with whatever status it can achieve *within* the over-arching context of the being that seeks to be what it is by virtue of itself. This is the sense in which Hegel is, as is often said, a 'monist.' But the kind of monism advocated by F. H. Bradley, and often described as 'Hegelian,' is not Hegel's because Hegel is always intent, throughout his system, on doing full justice to common sense's conceptions of plurality, under the headings of finitude, atomism, external reflection, diversity, Mechanism, living individuals,

space and time, Consciousness, abstract right, civil society, and so forth.<sup>41</sup> What makes him a monist is that he does this justice always within the the over-arching context of the being that seeks to be what it is by virtue of itself (and which recurs as true infinity, Essence, Identity, Ground, Actuality, the Concept, Life, the Absolute Idea, Spirit, and Absolute Spirit). Is Hegel justified in 'doing justice to plurality' *in this way*? It is hard to see how thought can hope to accomplish anything without having a *determinate* subject matter; and Hegel's notion that this determinacy must ultimately be in the subject matter itself, immediately, '*an sich*,' rather than in an endless and unsurveyable series of contrasts or 'negations,' has considerable plausibility. I'm not aware of a philosophy that treats this issue of determinacy as comprehensively as Hegel's does, and thus I'm not aware of a philosophy that shows how it can be treated without subordinating multiplicity to 'monism' in something like the way that Hegel does.<sup>42</sup>

To return to 'Life,' then: Hegel analyzes it as involving 'sensibility,' 'irritability,' and 'reproduction.'<sup>43</sup> 'Sensibility' is the capacity to experience impressions (from whatever source, internal or external to the organism); 'irritability' is the capacity to *respond* to such impressions, in a variety of possible ways; and 'reproduction' is the capacity, not to produce offspring, but to '*reproduce*' what one presently is: to maintain oneself in existence. The living thing exists, as such, insofar as it combines a sensitivity to itself and its surroundings with a response to itself and its surroundings in a way that reflects and (re-) produces its ongoing self.

This of course raises the issue, what is this 'self'? What is it that has to be 'reproduced,' for the living being to be successful in reproducing 'itself'? The answer to this question, Hegel suggests, comes (initially) from the 'Genus,' the *Gattung* – that is, from the species to which the being belongs. The being must continue to be a (functioning) *lion*, or *jackal*, or whatever it may be. And since the Genus is present to the individual, initially, only in the form of other individuals of the same Genus, and its relation to them, this has the result that the individual's 'self-feeling ... is *in* what is at the same time *another* self-standing individual'<sup>44</sup> – a relationship that Hegel also describes as the individual's '*identity with* the other individual,' and as 'the individual's *universality*.'<sup>45</sup> In the Doctrine of Essence, 'diversity' developed out of 'identity,' which preceded it, so that things could be 'diverse' without therefore being non-'identical.' 'Diversity' developed out of and thus is compatible with 'identity,' just as 'external reflection' developed out of 'positing reflection' (and thus out of essence as negativity), and therefore could not deny that when its formal pattern corresponded to theirs, it followed that it was still an instantiation of them, rather than a case of simple, free-standing externality. Because of the way in which negativity or true infinity (or, the 'being' that seeks to be what it is by virtue of itself) precedes all of these developments, they are all, therefore, in an important way 'internal' to negativity or true infinity. They must be interpreted, if possible,

as relating to what they proceed from – as ‘results,’ as Hegel says – rather than as original and free-standing. ‘External reflection’ relates in this way to essence as negativity, and diversity relates in this way to identity. This is why the living individual can be ‘*identical with*’ another living individual, while still being ‘diverse’ in relation to it.

Here we can already see why it is necessary for the Master, in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, ‘to be *present* for the other as a free self.’<sup>46</sup> If the individual’s ‘self-feeling ... is *in* what is at the same time *another* self-standing individual’<sup>47</sup> – if the two are in an important sense ‘identical’ – then it is evident that the freedom of the one will not be able to stand without the freedom of the other. So the priority of negativity, true infinity, and ‘identity,’ in the argument of the *Logic*, which have the result that Mechanism’s diverse objects and Life’s diverse individuals are nevertheless ‘identical,’ explains why the Master is not independent of the Bondsman.

Of course, the *full* explanation of the Master’s non-independence will include additional steps spelling out the nature of *freedom* (the feature that the Master is intent on possessing) and the nature of *Consciousness* (the relationship that the Bondsman has to have to the Master’s freedom). Hegel addresses freedom in some detail in the remainder of ‘Life,’ and in ‘Cognition.’ The first step toward freedom, the first ‘going beyond’ the individual’s finite givenness, was taken when the individual identified ‘herself’ not immediately, but by means of her Genus-membership. As Hegel pointed out, this brought to bear a kind of ‘universality,’<sup>48</sup> taking the individual beyond her initial limits as a momentary state of affairs. The individual in fact experiences the resulting situation – in which (because of this universality) she is ‘identical’ with other individuals who are, nevertheless, ‘self-standing,’ and thus independent of her – as a ‘contradiction.’<sup>49</sup> Her initial solution of this contradiction is to seek unity with others through copulation and ‘propagation of the living species.’<sup>50</sup> Through these, she goes beyond her momentary existence and its contradictoriness, but at the cost of a spuriously infinite ‘progress to infinity,’ in which her unification with others and with herself is simply through more individuals like herself (namely, her offspring), which, since they embody the same contradictoriness that she does, clearly can’t *solve* the problem. The solution to the overall problem, Hegel suggests, is ‘death’ – with the concomitant emergence of Spirit, in the form of ‘Cognition’ (*Erkennen*). It is ‘death’ in the sense that we can go beyond the (spuriously infinite) succession of individuals with their physical procreation only by ceasing to identify the individual’s or the species’s significance (their selfhood) with the prolongation of their physical existence. Such a changed view is already implicit in the first individual’s finding her ‘unity’ in her *offspring*, and not in her *own* physical survival. ‘Cognition’ will simply take this idea and generalize it: the individual’s selfhood, now, is found not in the prolongation of her own physical existence, nor in the physical existence of other individuals (her offspring), but in her relationship to reality through Cognition.

In Cognition, the cognizer relates to the cognized object, first as its object and thus its 'limitation' (*Schranke*)<sup>51</sup> – in 'theoretical' Cognition – and then as itself, or as something to be made (as it were) in its image – in 'practical' Cognition. Both relationships are one-sided, but when they are combined, so that the object itself is understood as the Concept which is engaged in seeking to make a world in its own image, their respective one-sidednesses are overcome (in the 'Absolute Idea'). Hegel speaks here of one Concept encountering 'the other Concept,' in the manner of Self-consciousness and, even before that, of Consciousness:<sup>52</sup> realizing that the world contains Conceptuality other than (as it were) one's 'own,' and ultimately realizing that this Conceptuality is in fact an 'identity' with one's own.<sup>53</sup> What this has to do with finding the individual's significance or her selfhood in something other than the prolongation of her physical existence is that to know the world or the object *as oneself* is to have an identity, a self, a significance that goes beyond one's finite life, and beyond any other finite life, as well. Hegel sums this result up in the following culminating statement:

[In the absolute Idea] the Concept is ... free subjective Concept that is for itself and therefore possesses *personality* – the practical, objective Concept determined in and for itself which, as person, is impenetrable atomic subjectivity, but which, nonetheless, is not exclusive singularity, but is for itself *universality* and *cognition*, and has in its other *its own* objectivity for its object.<sup>54</sup>

The Concept is persons. However, these persons don't merely go about their business, 'impenetrable and atomic,' indifferent to each other. Rather, they transcend themselves, first of all through their relationship to their Genus, and secondly – when they understand that they achieve more reality through this self-transcendence – by pursuing it consciously and systematically, so that they are 'for themselves *universality* and *cognition*.' When they understand themselves in this way, they have 'in their other *their own* objectivity for their object': they understand that despite their diversity, they are in fact 'identical' with the other 'impenetrable atomic subjectivity.'

In his treatment of Cognition, including the passage about Self-consciousness and Consciousness, Hegel has, in effect, anticipated everything that he does in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, up to the Master and Bondsman and 'Universal Self-Consciousness.' He has (briefly) brought out both (a) the way in which freedom, as thought, goes beyond freedom's initial form as identification with one's Genus (as he develops in detail in the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Spirit*), and also (b) the way in which one can and must be Conscious of others and of oneself as free, and how this Consciousness does not deprive one of an important kind of 'identity' with those others (as he develops in the Consciousness chapter of the *Philosophy*

of *Spirit*). Which, again, is why the Master must 'be *present* for the other [that is, for the Bondsman] as a free self.'<sup>55</sup>

## Objections and conclusion

So, finally: having identified Hegel's argument in support of his claim about what the Master's freedom requires, should we be convinced by it? It is well known that many readers of Hegel, including relatively 'spiritually' inclined philosophers like Charles Taylor, have found it difficult to entertain the argument's crucial intermediate conclusion – that free individuals are in an important sense 'identical' with each other – as something that could be true. They suspect that Hegel's 'Concept' and 'Spirit' reduce individual humans to 'vehicles' through which something non-human achieves its purposes, and consequently that they deprive human freedom of its substance.<sup>56</sup> And they have trouble thinking of any plausible sense in which humans might understand themselves as 'identical' with each other.

It is not too difficult to respond to the first objection – that the Concept and Spirit deprive humans of their freedom. If human beings are to be free, in the strong sense of the word 'free' that Hegel derives from Kant,<sup>57</sup> it will have to be possible for them to be what they are by virtue of themselves, rather than by virtue of their relations to what's other than themselves. As the 'beginning of the *subject*,'<sup>58</sup> 'negativity' is precisely an effort to indicate how such a freedom might be possible. True infinity, 'reflection,' 'identity,' the Concept and Spirit all follow in negativity's footsteps, in that regard. So we have no reason to regard any of them as a non-human agency that could use humans as its vehicles. Rather, they all represent a project of self-determination in which humans will presumably be among the most active and the most effective participants. Taylor is of course correct in thinking that Hegel intends true infinity and its successors to capture what is true in the traditional conception of God, but he is mistaken in thinking that this God will be opposed to humans in such a way that humans could be its mere 'vehicles.' The point of Hegel's critique of 'spurious infinity' is precisely to undermine the idea of such an opposition. Hegel proposes to defend human freedom by undermining that idea, while at the same time preserving the *truth* in traditional theism, which is the idea that the finite must go beyond itself, and constitute something infinite, in order to achieve full 'reality.'

The second objection to Hegel's argument – the one that asks, in what sense can humans understand themselves as being 'identical' with each other? – is a bit more of a challenge. Of course, as I've explained, this 'identity' is not supposed to eliminate the 'diversity' by which we are distinct from each other. But it is supposed to represent a higher-level reality that, in effect, deprives this 'diversity' of much of the importance that common sense and 'rational choice theory' – the 'understanding,' in all of its pervas-

ive forms – ascribes to it.<sup>59</sup> To (perhaps) enhance the initial plausibility of Hegel's suggestion, I would point out that a long line of thinkers have agreed with Hegel that what separates us from each other, ontologically, is ultimately less real than what unites us with each other, ontologically. This idea seems to represent the gist of (for example) Diotima's Speech, in Plato's *Symposium*, and it is developed by Aristotle, in his ethics and theology,<sup>60</sup> by the Stoics, in their pantheism and their doctrine of living in accordance with nature, by Neoplatonists like Plotinus,<sup>61</sup> and by Spinoza.<sup>62</sup> It is also powerfully advocated by the 'mystical' strands of all of the major religious traditions around the world, from Taoism and Buddhism to all three of the monotheistic religions that are based on the Hebrew scriptures. It is not an accident that Hegel said that 'the mystical' could be taken as 'synonymous with the *speculative*,' which for him is the highest level of philosophical thought.<sup>63</sup> He goes on, of course, to claim that this mysticism is not mere 'enthusiasm' (*Schwärmerei*), but is fully rational; and his argument to this effect is precisely the argument that I've been tracing in this chapter.<sup>64</sup> Whatever you think of the argument's soundness, you will grant, at least, that it is remarkably *systematic*. That it coheres with a major part of Earth's spiritual traditions seems to me to lend it additional plausibility. A third reason for taking it seriously is the weakness of *non*-'mystical' arguments against rational egoism like, in particular, those developed by Hobbes and Kant.<sup>65</sup> These three considerations should be enough to motivate giving Hegel's argument more respect and more analysis and discussion than it has been given recently. I hope that my remarks here will help to promote this respect, analysis, and discussion.

## Notes

1. I discuss the *Logic's* relevance to all three of these sets of issues in Robert M. Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom, and God* (2005).
2. 'Wissenschaft der Logik,' in 5 G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* 192 (Eva Moldenhauer & Karl M. Michel eds, 1970) [hereinafter cited as *WL*]; 21 G.W.F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* 160 I. 33–6 (1968) [hereinafter cited as *GW*]; *Hegel's Science of logic* 172 (1967) [hereinafter cited as *SL*]. I give volume and page numbers in *GW*, but the line numbers that follow the page numbers are from the handy Philosophische Bibliothek edition of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in three volumes edited by H.-J. Gawoll (1990, 1994, 1999). The third page number in references to the *Logic* is from the Miller translation. Translations are my own. I have omitted some of Hegel's emphases and, in some cases, inserted italics of my own.
3. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* § 436 (William Wallace & Arnold V. Miller trans. 1971) [hereinafter cited as *EG*]; G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* 192 (A.V. Miller trans. 1977).
4. *EG*, *supra* note 4, § 436 Remark.
5. *EG*, *supra* note 4, § 430.

6. The only book I'm aware of that suggests that Hegel's account of 'recognition,' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Spirit*, is an elaboration of ideas that first emerge (within the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*) in his *Logic* is Paul Redding, *Hegel's Hermeneutics* 156–65 (1996). It will be clear from what follows that I have found this to be an extremely fruitful hypothesis. Robert Williams gives a useful discussion of Hegel's views on whole/part relationships, Mechanism, and Chemism in the *Science of Logic*, but Williams introduces them only in connection with the topic of 'The State as a Social Organism' (in contrast to social contract theories of the state). As for Hegel's account of 'recognition,' in the *Encyclopedia* and elsewhere, Williams doesn't appear to view the *Logic* as necessary for making sense of it. Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* 300–12 (1997).
7. Georg W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic* § 95 (William Wallace trans., 1975) [hereinafter cited as *EL*].
8. *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 118; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 98 l. 29; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 111.
9. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 121; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 101 l. 38; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 113.
10. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 123; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 103 l. 11; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 115.
11. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 128; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 107 l. 32–3; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 119.
12. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 123; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 103 l. 27; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 115.
13. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 129, 131; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 108 l. 1; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 120, 122.
14. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 134; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 112 l. 23–4; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 124.
15. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 136; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 113 l. 20; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 126.
16. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 137; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 114 l. 24; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 127.
17. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 143; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 119 l. 25; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 132.
18. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 160; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 133 l. 36–7; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 145–6.
19. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 160; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 133 l. 38–42; *SL* *supra* note 2, at 146.
20. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 160; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 133 l. 33–4; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 145.
21. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 158; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 132 l. 8; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 144.
22. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 150; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 125 l. 10; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 138.
23. *EL*, *supra* note 7 § 38 Remark ('Empiricism contains the great principle [*dies große Prinzip*] that what is true must be in actuality and must be there for perception').
24. 'Perception,' here, – the German is *Wahrnehmung*, literally 'taking true' – is not mere sensation, but involves access to the truth of the object, which Hegel is associating with its being itself by going beyond itself – its 'infinity.' This whole demonstration that what is real is the infinite does not appear in Hegel's Jena publications, in particular in his *Differenzschrift* and *Faith and Knowledge*, so that his assertion there (over against Kant and Fichte) of the unity of the finite and



- the infinite is, in effect, dogmatic. G.W.F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge* (H.S. Harris & W. Cerf trans., 1977); G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (H.S. Harris & W. Cerf trans., 1977). So any complete discussion of Hegel's critiques of Kant and Fichte, and of his alternative account of the finite and the infinite, which backs up those critiques, must take the *Science of Logic* into account. This is not done in leading publications on this subject, such as Paul Guyer, 'Thought and Being: Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Frederick C. Beiser, ed., 1993); Paul Guyer, 'Absolute Idealism and the Rejection of Kantian Dualism,' in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Karl Ameriks ed., 2000).
25. 5 WL, *supra* note 2, at 182; 21 GW, *supra* note 2, at 151 l. 27; SL, *supra* note 2, at 163.
  26. 5 WL, *supra* note 2, at 437; 21 GW, *supra* note 2, at 365 l. 17–18; SL, *supra* note 2, at 368.
  27. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 14; 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 242 l. 22–31; SL, *supra* note 2, at 390.
  28. 5 WL, *supra* note 2, at 123; 21 GW, *supra* note 2, at 103 l. 27; SL, *supra* note 2, at 115.
  29. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 27; 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 251 l. 13–18; SL, *supra* note 2, at 401.
  30. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 29; 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 253 l. 33–9; SL, *supra* note 2, at 403–4.
  31. 6 WL *supra* note 2, at 48; 11 GW, *supra* note 2, at 267 l. 8; SL, *supra* note 2, at 419 (emphasis added).
  32. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 277; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 35 l. 36–8; SL, *supra* note 2, at 603.
  33. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 408; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 133 l. 11–14; SL, *supra* note 2, at 710.
  34. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 423; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 143 l. 33; SL, *supra* note 2, at 722.
  35. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 444; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 159 l. 25; SL, *supra* note 2, at 739.
  36. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 401; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 126 l. 20; SL, *supra* note 2, at 704.
  37. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 270; 21 GW, *supra* note 2, at 29 l. 17–19; SL, *supra* note 2, at 596.
  38. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 14; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 242 l. 24–5; SL, *supra* note 2, at 390.
  39. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 461; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 172 l. 18; SL, *supra* note 2, at 753.
  40. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 468; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 177 l. 34; SL, *supra* note 2, at 760.
  41. Rolf-Peter Horstmann distinguishes Hegel's monism from Bradley's, though without making the point that I just made about Hegel's treatment of common-sense conceptions of plurality. Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Ontologie und Relationen* (1984).
  42. In atomism, for example, which postulates an unsubordinated multiplicity of 'atoms' as the nature of reality, there is no conception of determinate *quality* that could serve as an alternative to Hegel's conception of quality as 'negation,' and consequently atomism doesn't solve the general problem of determinacy that Hegel is addressing with his account of negation and 'negativity.'



43. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 478–80; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 185–6; SL, *supra* note 2, at 768–9; EL, *supra* note 7, 218 Addition.
44. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 485; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 190 l. 35–41; SL, *supra* note 2, at 773.
45. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 485; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 190 l. 14; SL, *supra* note 2, at 773 (emphasis added).
46. EG, *supra* note 4, § 430.
47. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 485; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 190 l. 35–41; SL, *supra* note 2, at 773.
48. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 485; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 190 l. 14; SL, *supra* note 2, at 773.
49. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 485; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 190 l. 1; SL, *supra* note 2, at 773.
50. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 486; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 191 l. 2; SL, *supra* note 2, at 774.
51. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 497; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 199 l. 5; SL, *supra* note 2, at 783.
52. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 545; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 233 l. 15–25; SL, *supra* note 2, at 820–21.
53. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 548; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 235 l. 15; SL, *supra* note 2, at 823.
54. 6 WL, *supra* note 2, at 549; 12 GW, *supra* note 2, at 236 l. 4–11; SL, *supra* note 2, at 824.
55. EG, *supra* note 4, § 430. It is important to realize that Hegel does *not* say, and his argument does not demonstrate, that the Master needs to be ‘recognized’ as free by any actual being in order to be free. What Hegel does say and demonstrate is that the Master needs to ‘be present for the other as a free self,’ and that in order to be present in this way he needs to recognize the *other’s* capacity for freedom (since he can’t ‘be present’ as free to an other who isn’t capable of freedom and therefore isn’t capable of appreciating freedom). This seems to be the natural interpretation of Hegel’s statement that each free self ‘knows itself as recognized in the free other ... *insofar as it recognizes the other and knows it to be free*’ *Id.* §436 (emphasis added). Thus, contrary to what is often suggested – for example, by Robert Brandom, who wrote that a person ‘is free insofar as he is one of us. There is no objective fact of the matter concerning his freedom to which we can appeal beyond the judgment of our own community... . On this view, then, man is not objectively free.’ Robert Brandom, ‘Freedom and Constraint by Norms,’ 16 *Am. Phil. Q.* 187, 192 (1979) – *Hegel’s argument for mutual recognition does not make anything a ‘social construct.’* What freedom requires, according to the ‘recognition’ argument in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, is not membership in a mutual-congratulation club, but willingness to accept objectively qualified others into the club that one wants to belong to, oneself.
56. According to Charles Taylor, Hegel sees individual humans as ‘vehicles’ for the embodiment of ‘cosmic spirit’ or of a ‘cosmic reason’ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* 89, 562 (1975). Taylor himself doesn’t dispute Hegel’s claim to be depicting human as well as divine freedom, but I think it’s likely that many of Taylor’s readers have found this claim of Hegel’s (as Taylor depicts it) wildly implausible. Twenty-eight years after the publication of Taylor’s book, Hegel still gets no attention in surveys – in English, at least – of major philosophical conceptions of human freedom and its relation to nature. Until someone gives the philosophical public an interpretation that makes what Hegel says about this issue look a bit more plausible, this situation is unlikely to change.

57. On Kantian 'infinite autonomy,' see G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* § 135 Remark (Allen W. Wood trans. 1993).
58. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 123; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 103 l. 27; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 115.
59. 'True infinity ... is reality in a higher sense than the former reality which was determinate in a one-fold manner' 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 164; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 136 l. 5–7; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 149 (emphasis altered).
60. 'We ... must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us.' Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, § 1177b33 (James A.K. Thomson trans., 1955). For illuminating commentary on Aristotle's theology, see C. David Reeve, *Substantial Knowledge: Aristotle's Metaphysics* ch. 8 (2000).
61. Questioning Plotinus's conception of individuality and its overcoming, Terence Irwin writes that, on Plotinus's view, 'the result of my detachment from the body is the eventual loss, if I face the truth about ultimate reality, of any sense of my own distinct reality. We may wonder if, in that case, it is good for us to face the truth' Terence Irwin, *Classical Thought* 199 (1989). Plotinus does not seem to have a systematic reconciliation of divine unity and human plurality. Hegel, on the other hand, in 'true infinity' and in his account of the relation between 'identity' and 'diversity,' shows how while the finite and plural achieves full reality only through the infinite and 'identical,' the latter in turn *exists only as the self-transcendence of the former*. 5 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 160; 21 *GW*, *supra* note 2, at 133 l. 36–7; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 145–6. In this way, Hegel seems to resolve a major problem of the Platonic tradition (and perhaps of 'mystical' thinking in general).
62. As with Plotinus, one might wonder whether either the Stoics or Spinoza successfully clarify the way in which the point of view of 'diversity' or the individual *relates to the point of view of God* (the 'indifference' or the *sub specie aeternitatis*).
63. *EL*, *supra* note 7, §82 Addition (emphasis added). For some of Hegel's appreciative comments on leading mystical writers, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in 19 *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* 435–86 (Eva Moldenhauer & Karl M. Michel eds, 1970) (on Plotinus and Proclus); 20 *id.* at 91–119 (on Jakob Böhme); 1 G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* 347–8 (Robert F. Brown, Peter C. Hodgson & J. Michael Stewart trans., 1984) (on Meister Eckhart); *EG*, *supra* note 4, § 573 & n. Remark (on Jelalludin Rumi).
64. Hegel discusses the accusation of '*Schwärmerei*' in detail in connection with Plotinus. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in 19 *Werke*, *supra* note 63, at 440–5.
65. Hobbes seems to overlook the fact that we regularly risk our lives for modest gains, as long as the level of risk seems to be foreseeable and low. (So why should the 'fool' not do the same when it appears likely that breaking his contract with his fellow citizens will be profitable?) And Kant seems to overlook the possibility that completely self-centered and thus non-moral reasoning might nevertheless be fully 'autonomous,' if it is directed at gaining what is *objectively good for the reasoner*, rather than merely at satisfying her 'inclinations.' I discuss these weaknesses of Hobbes's and Kant's attempts to refute rational egoism, and I discuss some of the relevant secondary literature, in ch. 2 of *Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom, and God*, *supra* note 1.

# 12

## Hegel's *Science of Logic* in an Analytic Mode

*Clark Butler*

The concept of the subject, of what Hegel calls absolute negativity, already appears early in the logic of being.<sup>1</sup> Absolute negativity, negation of the negation, occurs throughout the logic as identity in difference understood as self-identification under different descriptions. First, the subject refers to itself merely under an incomplete description. Secondly, it refers to something other than itself under a second description which is logically required by the first. (For example, the description of being in general requires some determinate description of being in particular). But this second description is dialectically excluded by the assumption that the first description is complete. Thirdly, the subject negates its negation of the other. It discovers itself in the other, under the other description, and thus comes to refer to itself less incompletely. This is Hegel in the analytic mode.

The very concept of analytic Hegelianism may suggest that we have deformed Hegel. Perhaps it would be more honest to call my proposal something else. My reply is that I am maintaining the essential content of Hegelianism even while developing the form further. This content, the content of systematically dialectical speculative philosophy, lies in two essential theses. The first is the thesis of the whole speculative tradition up to and including Schelling: in and through human knowledge of the absolute, the absolute knows itself.<sup>2</sup> The second thesis is specifically Hegelian: the absolute comes to know itself concretely by a deductively necessary dialectical thought process realized both in the history of philosophy and in world history.<sup>3</sup>

My ultimate project is to restate Hegel's dialectical logic in quantification logic. The technical aspects of it will not be my focus here.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I apply linguistic ascent<sup>5</sup> by translating the central Hegelian concept of identity in difference into the Fregean language of identity under different descriptions. More particularly, I use Keith Donnellan's concept of successful reference under a false description (i.e. the non-attributive use of definite descriptions) to interpret Hegelian identity of the absolute under descrip-

tions that dialectically prove false. By 'attributive,' Donnellan means the following. All definite descriptions are referential. Some such descriptions are true. The speaker frequently attributes the description to the referent, as we might attribute to Queen Elizabeth being head of the Anglican church. Other descriptions used in reference are non-attributive or false, as the speaker may have no intention of attributing those descriptions to the referent. For example, Spinoza makes attributive as well as referential use of the term 'substance,' insofar as Spinoza thought the absolute was substance. But Hegel makes purely referential use of the term 'substance.' For Hegel, to be the absolute is not to be merely substance.

In undertaking the proposed translation, I put philological exegetical explication of Hegel's texts to the side. I myself practice such explication, but I do not think that it does enough to clarify Hegel for us today. In translating Hegel's 1831 lectures on the science of logic, I use the phrase 'identity in difference,' not 'identity under different descriptions.' But that is a translation of Hegel's words. This chapter is a restatement of Hegel's concept by linguistic ascent.

My motive for restating Hegel's science of logic in an analytic mode is in part because many people find Hegel's language obscure, while they find the Fregean language clear. Unfortunately, Hegel did not have twentieth century symbolic logic available, so that he could not state himself as clearly as we can. As he was a conservative in science, it is reasonable to suppose that Hegel would use contemporary logic if he were alive today.

Do I expect to win more friends for Hegel's science of logic by my procedure? Not necessarily. Modern symbolic logic is a 'language' for doing philosophy, not a philosophy as such. Translation of the Hegelian position into that language is not a justification of it. Many very different philosophies can be translated into symbolic logic. Frege's distinction between sense and reference has been used to make materialism clear. The mind is brain process under a different description. I would not expect that its use in making Hegelian idealism clear would by itself resolve disputes between idealists and materialists. At most we might expect more widespread discussion of the issues.

If symbolic logic were a philosophy, e.g. if it were the philosophy of logical atomism, I would agree that translating the Hegelian position into analytic philosophy would prove impossible. But the failure of the attempt would favor Hegel rather than logical atomism. I think that any logical atomist claim that 'This is yellow' states an atomic fact can be refuted, and that Hegel's early demonstration in the science of logic that positive qualities imply negative qualities contains such a refutation.<sup>6</sup> But since symbolic logic is only a language for doing philosophy, I do not think it must necessarily fail.

Symbolic logic itself has evolved and can serve as a vehicle for restating Hegel. As Hegelians we may adopt Frege's distinction between our rich but

sometimes ambiguous ordinary language and the disambiguated but more mechanical language of quantification logic. That there is a speculative genius to ordinary language,<sup>7</sup> or that everyone assimilates the truth most deeply in his native tongue,<sup>8</sup> does not mean that there is nothing for Hegelians to learn from regimentation in quantification logic.

Quine denied that symbolic logic is more successful in getting at the meaning of than the ordinary language original. Rather, he argued that, when pragmatically we are concerned with simplicity and ontological economy, the logical language sometimes usefully replaces ordinary language. But H.P. Grice, in respecting and preserving what is said, as determined by the sentence's truth conditions,<sup>9</sup> while distinguishing from it what the speaker means to say, is closer to Hegel. Meaning is not use, as Wittgensteinians have thought, and economical use is not our only concern as some Quinians might suggest. Quantification logic gets at the constant semantics of an ordinary language sentence even when, pragmatically, uses of that sentence vary. Such logic gets at what the sentence says without necessarily capturing what the utterer means or intends in saying it.<sup>10</sup> Ordinary sentences containing the verb *aufheben*, regardless of varying speaker intentions in uttering them, express conflicting meanings, according to Hegel.<sup>11</sup> But if this is so, symbolization by quantification logic would purge ordinary language containing that verb of its rich ambiguity. Senses are now expressed in quantification logic without ambiguity by assigning different terms to different senses. A general Gricean solution to the problem of means seems to accommodate, better than Wittgenstein's or Quine's solution, Hegel's respect for the sense and ambiguity of ordinary language while allowing for the possibility of quantification.

Symbolic logic does not replace ordinary language with its rich speculative spirit. Rather, symbolic logic reduces the speculative content of ordinary language to a kind of child's play, so that we can return to ordinary language with a better conscience – much as a good musician might return to the enjoyment of Paganini's caprices reassured by knowledge of the technique needed to play through them.

Despite what he says of the speculative ambiguity of German, Hegel's own systematic writing is surprisingly free of ambiguity. 'Being' retains the same sense at the end of the logic as it has at the beginning, where what has being is considered totally indeterminate. New predicates are added, but the sense of the old one's remains. Hegel's logical syntax predates quantification logic, but just as he would likely be a Darwinian were he alive today, he would also likely use quantification logic. A non-ambiguous use of terms is of course necessary if the dialectic is to be, as Hegel claims, deductively necessary.

Like Frege, Hegel would undoubtedly deny that there is only one correct analysis of ordinary statements. 'John is Mary's father' can also be analyzed as 'Mary is John's daughter,' or as 'x being the father of y is co-

instantiated by the ordered pair John and Mary.' None of these analyses gets at the one and only one logical structure of the English. Formal logic disambiguates an ordinary English sentence, but if the ordinary language is, as Hegel thinks, richly ambiguous each disambiguation loses part of the sentence's meaning. Other logical expressions, however, might be added to retrieve this lost meaning.

To understand a singular sentence does not require that we have the complete science of the referent, including all its properties. It does not require that we know how it is related to everything in the universe, as Russell thinks Hegelianism demands.<sup>12</sup> For Hegel, knowledge of the absolute begins with abstract predicates like being, determinate being, something, and something else, to the implicit exclusion of all the other predicates that follow. Even a system of prepositional thought as complete or concrete as Hegel achieved fails to exhaust, as he admits in its 1829 review of Göschel,<sup>13</sup> the full nature of the absolute as we are acquainted with it in feeling. The most that can be said is that when negation of the negation is asserted once it is asserted a million times, and a million times plus one. To grasp the principle of dialectical cycle is to grasp proleptically the infinite series of cycles necessary to fully describe the absolute.

Michael Dummett's interpretation of Frege's 'contextual principle' suggests a similarity between Hegel and Frege in opposition to Russell's atomist tendency. His interpretation suggests that the reference of 'Saddam Hussein' can be fixed semantically only through all actual statements that contain that name, including true statements like 'Saddam Hussein denounced Bin Laden,' but also including possibly false statements like 'Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.'<sup>14</sup> On Dummett's interpretation, Frege's context principle does imply that the full sense of a singular term includes the different senses or descriptions by which all speakers have in fact referred to the same referent, including false descriptions. If a singular term includes its sense, it refers to all speakers who have used the term referentially. So if a sentence and its meaning are determined by all actual references to what the sentence is about, one sentence is determinate only in a public linguistic context of other sentences. And this is different from the ontological context principle that to know a thing is to know everything about it, including all its relations to everything in the universe. But Russell was mistaken that Hegel adopted this ontological principle. Hegel in fact believed that we can know something about the absolute without knowing everything about it. In knowing that it has indeterminate being, Parmenides *partook* in complete knowledge of the absolute without having it completely.<sup>15</sup> He successfully referred to it without knowing all true statements about it that eventually follow in the dialectic.

That categories in Hegel's science of logic, I am claiming, have theoretical import follows from his claim that successive categories can be

'deduced' from previous ones.<sup>16</sup> Each theory in Hegel's science of logic is established by an indirect proof assumption, not just by premises.<sup>17</sup> Each of these assumptions identifies the absolute under an identifying description that preserves descriptions from the previous ways of identifying the absolute, while particularizing them through the addition of further descriptive predicates.

Among the different categories in Hegel's logic, the concrete category of identity in difference emerges explicitly – I would say that it was implicitly present much earlier – as a correction of the abstract opposition of identity and difference early in the logic of essence.<sup>18</sup> But such identity in difference is, from then on, a permanent gain in the science of logic.

Identity in difference is the category that permits linguistic ascent within Hegelianism itself. It thus permits a transition from classical Hegelianism to Hegelianism in an analytic mode. To assert that the absolute exhibits self-identity in difference means, linguistically, that the absolute, existing under one description, is always rediscoverable as existing under another description. If it has concrete being in itself and not just being for us, what exists under a general description also exists under a more particular description.<sup>19</sup>

If this is correct, the attainment of Hegelian identity in difference is a Fregean discovery that a referent exists under different descriptions.<sup>20</sup> The discovery that the morning star is the evening star presupposes and corrects a belief that the morning star is possibly distinct from the evening star. Before the discovery, the morning star was viewed as possibly not being the evening star. But the morning star is necessarily the evening star by the identity of indiscernibles even if the discovery of their identity is empirical. Once the discovery is made, the morning star's known identity expands to include the different description. The discovery of identity under different descriptions is the discovery of identity under a single more comprehensive description. But until the discovery, the morning star is placed outside of itself, under the *disguise* of actually and hence possibly not being the evening star in order for this separation or alienation of itself from itself to be overcome. One is tempted to say that it is only mind, not a thing, that can step outside itself in this way. Our alienation from the truth in referring to the morning star under a false description seems to leave that star itself unaffected. But the star is what it is through all its properties, including any property of being described falsely. When it is falsely described by us, it enters our thought world by being placed by us outside itself. The star's alienation from itself is mediated by human activity of description and misdescription.

Here I slip from Fregean into Hegelian language. Given the revealed identity of the two stars, reference to the morning star as separate from the evening star displaces the first star from itself. It is differentiated from itself, placed under a different description that proves to be untrue. Through the



mediation of our thinking, it is displaced.<sup>21</sup> The logical idea at the end of the *Logic* is placed or displaced under the description of being not the logical idea but nature, under the description of being other than itself

For anything that is referred to under one finite description to be fully *concrete*, it must be reidentifiable under some more particular description falling outside the first description. A thing's being in itself cannot be reduced to its being for something else. Hence it cannot be reduced to its being for me. What exists always goes beyond the description of it. What further description an existent falls under cannot be deduced from a true description of it up to the present.

Whatever exists concretely satisfies different descriptions. It subsists beyond any given finite true description by which we may refer to it. As we contemplate a house under the description of its blueprint, the house contains in itself (*an sich*) much detail that so far has no being for us (*für uns*). When detail is realized we first experience it as something beyond the initial concept, only to embrace it in the end as the concept itself in its fuller realization. The house in the blueprint is rediscovered under a more particular and sometimes surprising description when the house is actually built.<sup>22</sup>

According to the category of ground and consequent that follows Hegel's category of identity and difference, the absolute is self-identical under an allegedly complete description that deductively includes all the different temporally-indexed descriptions as consequents of the ground. This conceptual grasp enjoyed by LaPlace's deterministic super-scientist<sup>23</sup> no longer discovers the absolute under a different description, but only explores the implications of its own self-identical total description of grounding law and the full world state at any time.<sup>24</sup>

In this new LaPlacean theory of the absolute, a new proposition is introduced: any total grounding description logically implies all empirical consequent descriptions. I call this a mediately discovered premise – a premise not introduced at the beginning as in an axiomatic method, but which arises only in the course of the derivation.

No description which follows as a consequence is ever really new. It is a logically implied part of the total grounding description. Only its explicit statement can be new. Generally, analytic statements are discovered in the science of logic, and they are maintained as permanent gains in the progress of the dialectic. For example, to be is to be determinate. To be finite is to be contradictory. The true infinite includes the finite, and so on. In such analytic statements we find positive, non-dialectical doctrine. They show that the *Logic*, if we leave the dialectic aside, contains conceptual analysis in a rather prosaic sense.

The analytic movement accused Hegelianism of claiming that to know something is to know all its relations to everything else, including all its causes and effects. But even if some British idealists may have held that the



absolute is a single organic whole of internally related parts, that was not Hegel's view. Hegel held a middle position between saying that everything is internally related to everything else and saying that nothing is so related. This is clear, I believe, from the fact that Hegel adhered to the microcosm/macrocosm distinction, something Russell does not appreciate. The 'object,' in the logic of the concept, is an *intersubjective* macrocosm. To quote from Hegel's 1831 lectures on logic: 'The object is ... the totality and is identical with itself. But it is such a totality as contains differences in itself, and indeed such that every difference is also [microcosmically] a totality.... Each of these differences is also the entire concept. Every moment of the object is the totality of the object, and yet they makes up only one totality.'<sup>25</sup>

The question remains as to the relation between the different totalities in the one totality. Insofar as each is a determination that helps make up the totality, they are internally related within the overreaching one. But insofar as each is the entire concept embracing all internally related determinations, the different totalities are qualitatively convergent ones, not different but internally related ones. Similar to Leibniz's monads though they are not windowless, these totalities, except for their different degrees of development, are only numerically different. However, we cannot content ourselves with distinguishing what a thing is insofar as it is F and what it is insofar as it is non-F. For it is either F or non-F, and we want to know which. This is a deep question of Hegel interpretation, and I cannot go much beyond stating my position here. My position is that the overreaching totality has no individual existence except in one or another microcosmic totality said to be contained in it. The microcosm alone has individuality. The macrocosmic aggregate acquires individual existence only in its microcosms. God has no subjective point of view beyond the subjectivity of this, that, or the human or other mind.

As different instances of the same entire concept, microcosmic totalities are externally related. The macrocosmic totality is an aggregate of ones. But they are not coordinated from above by a Leibnizian God. Rather, each adjusts to the others by finding itself in them, transposing itself in them. God as creator, at once posits the creature as other than himself, and then transposes (or transposits) himself into the creature. 'God knows the world, knows humanity, only insofar as he is in it; or, if the world has not remained with him, only insofar as he from his side transposes himself into the world.'<sup>26</sup> 'Self-transposition' is a term used by C.F. Göschel, but Hegel quotes it approvingly. It means not just taking the standpoint of the other in imagination, but truly finding oneself in the other self in a conceptual totality. One is not internally related to the other totality, but one is identical with it, except for being on a higher or lower level of development. The other is one's own less or more developed self. God as higher is, in the Incarnation, identical with man as lower.

Internal relations may connect your present toothache to the recollection of your last toothache, but unless you have telepathic powers it is not internally related to every toothache in India. Both your field of consciousness and the one belonging to someone in India reflect the same world from different points of view. It is even possible for you to observe the speech and behavior of the other individual, and then to know the other's toothache empathetically as you transpose yourself into the other's point of view. But you do not thereby feel the other's toothache, you only feel its ripple effect in your own field of consciousness.

Now if something is internally related to something else, to go inside it analytically is ultimately to go outside it. This is a Hegelian principle. The inner is the outer, inner force is upon analysis the outer expression. To go into indeterminate being merely as indeterminate being is to be forced outside it into determinate being. What has being in itself also has being for something else.<sup>27</sup> Yellowness, we learn from G.E. Moore, is a simple quality unanalyzable into simpler determinations. Yet yellowness is in itself determinate only by not being blueness. The negative analysis of yellowness is not only possible but never comes to an end, since we can never be sure we have enumerated all its determinate others. To be king is not to be queen, prince, dauphin, president, emperor, subject, feudal lord, or courtier, and on and on. Yellowness is determinate only by negating each member in the open-ended series of its determinate others. Thus, unless yellowness is totally indeterminate, 'This is yellow' cannot, as Russell liked to suppose, express an atomic fact. It also follows that analysis is never complete, and that reference is never completely determine.

It is a Quinian dictum that if something does not itch we should not scratch. He thus places analysis in a pragmatic context. Though never *absolutely* complete, analysis may be *pragmatically* complete if it resolves all presently identified problems, all contradictions known thus far. A new contradiction may emerge, but the future must be allowed to take care of itself.<sup>28</sup> As I suggested earlier, Hegel may have a Gricean conception of meaning, but he has a Quinian conception of how we repair our theory of the absolute at sea, without being to get outside of the vessel and compare it to the absolute itself. Hegel is concerned with how, in the history of philosophy, a contradictory rational theology of the absolute is salvaged and repaired at sea by translating it into a new theory which is free of contradiction. A re-identification that resolves the contradictions or other problems of past identifications is pragmatically acceptable, for both Hegel and Quine, until further notice. What is constant for both is a method of embarking on re-identification when a new contradiction or other conceptual problem arises.

A new identification of the absolute arises to resolve a contradiction in a previous identification. The contradiction arises because it is not possible to get into a particular way of identifying the absolute without going beyond

it. 'The absolute is merely determinate being' is adopted in order to escape the contradiction in saying 'The absolute is merely pure being.' The new proposition may prove contradictory. For the moment, it is only the most immediate, ready-at-hand way of avoiding contradiction.

That the absolute is that outside of which there is nothing is definitional in the language of the science of logic, but that the absolute is merely determinate being is contingent, and like any contingent statement it may prove contradictory. The *Science of Logic* presupposes an analytic definition of being the absolute, but its investigation is not one of analysis *per se*. Nor does it derive theorems from an axiomatic base, from the induction of causal laws, or from 'conjecture and refutation' in Popper's sense of experimental refutation. Rather, it is 'conjecture and refutation' in the dialectical sense of finding contradictions in different ways of identifying the absolute.

The work of the *Science of Logic* lies, not in analysis of what it is to be the absolute, but in analysis of particular identifying descriptions of the absolute. The result of its analysis is to establish statements such as 'To be is to be determinate' or 'To be positively determinate is to be negatively determinate' to be analytically true. The function of analysis in the science of logic is to uncover and analyze any relations of putatively non-relational concepts.

Hegel himself, I think, mistakenly calls his categories 'definitions of the absolute.'<sup>29</sup> If the absolute is that outside of which there is nothing throughout the system of philosophy, 'the absolute' changes neither in meaning nor reference throughout the logic. Instead of re-defining the absolute, by each new category of thinking tries to re-identify the absolute under a more particular definite description. There can only be one entity outside of which there is nothing, so that the addition of new identifying descriptions of it cannot affect the reference of 'the absolute.'

The science of logic is a kind of detective story in which we start out knowing what we're looking for in general, and proceed to identify it in particular after a series of misidentifications. Despite Hegel's way of speaking, this should not be viewed as a matter of defining or redefining the absolute, but as identifying and re-identifying it. If the Logic contained seventy-two analytic definitions of the absolute, it would contain seventy-two languages. It could not unfold a single deductively necessary line of thought, since deduction requires that each term be used in only one sense. The *Science of Logic* would contain seventy-two illustrations of the Quinian point that analyticity is not absolute, but is relative to a language and theory. Quine may be right, but I do not think that the science of logic is a good illustration of his point.

Relational analytic statements such as 'To be is to be something that is not something else' refute the existence of the absolute merely under a simple monadic description. Analysis in the science of logic thus plays a critical role. Even the last category in the logic, the absolute idea, invites further analysis. We do not know that there is no further logical category

beyond the absolute idea because in looking for one we only repeat past categories. Rather, we know it is the last logical category because we find the absolute idea analytically to be relative to something beyond all purely logical categories of pure imageless thought. The absolute idea is relative to the concept of the sensory other of all purely logical categories, to the concept of nature. In nature the absolute idea is forced to step outside itself, to assume a disguise, until as spirit the idea ceases to be absolute and lays claim to itself under the description of being nature as well as idea. Until a contradiction is found in some analytic relativity of the concept of self-knowing spirit at the culmination of the whole Hegelian system to still something else, self-knowing spirit will stand as the true descriptive identification of the absolute. But that the absolute is self-knowing spirit is not analytic, it is simply a contingent statement not falsified by any further analytic relational statement.

Until the last identification of the absolute is shown to be necessarily false, it is the way by which we continue to refer most successfully to the absolute, by which we partake of knowledge of it. If a contradiction were found, we would refer to the absolute attributively by a different description, but by one that would contain much that is contained in the present description.

The logic is a dialectical system of rational theology, not ontology. A theological property, used in identifying the absolute, is abstracted from a universal ontological property, a purported quality of everything. An ontological category initially differs from a mere empirical concept by such universal application. Hegel says that each category is true *both* of everything *and* of the absolute in which everything is: 'Everything is diverse ... , everything is an opposite ..., everything has a ground... . Everything is a judgment ...'<sup>30</sup> 'Everything is a syllogism ...'.'<sup>31</sup>

But if Hegel's concern is to identify the absolute, we may wonder why he even mentions the application of categories to finite things. Here, I suggest, we recall Kant's view that each category has a legitimate cognitive use in application to the finite objects of experience, but that it lacks legitimate use in application to God. Hegel holds that the finite is *in* the true infinite, so that this infinite does not need to be inferred from the finite as the false infinite is inferred from the finite in classical metaphysics.

He certainly does not argue that, since everything finite is a ground, the absolute is ground. The deduction of the absolute as ground rather arises from the collapse of the prior identification of the absolute as self-identical under a given description to the exclusion of a different true description.<sup>32</sup> Yet once the absolute is identified as ground, ground also becomes the dominant ontological category. The inference here goes from the infinite to the finite, not from the finite to the infinite. Everything finite partakes of the infinite and microcosmically reflects it, and that, it seems, is why everything is a ground when the absolute is identified as ground.

## Notes

1. 'But in something [*Etwas*] the subject already begins to be. Something is the negative oneness [of what refers to itself in referring to what does not merely have being but is determinate and hence the negation of simple being].' G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Logik* 107 (Udo Rameil & Hans-Christian Lucas ed, 2001). I quote from Hegel's Summer 1831 lectures on logic in my translation. Until their 2001 publication they were unknown even in German. The 1831 lectures were the last that Hegel completed before his death. They deserve to be known as a last and orally comprehensible introduction to the science of logic. The translation is forthcoming from Indiana University Press, 2006.
2. 'Nature's highest goal, to become wholly an object to herself, is achieved only through the last and highest order of reflection, which is none other than man; or, more generally, it is what we call reason, whereby nature first completely returns into herself, and by which it becomes apparent that nature is identical from the first with what we recognize in ourselves as the intelligent and the conscious.' Friedrich Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* § 1.4 A (Peter Heath trans., 1978) (Introduction).
3. Clark Butler, *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* (1997).
4. See Clark Butler, 'Hegel's Dialectic of the Organic Whole as An Application of Formal Logic,' *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy* 212 (1980). For qualifications that apply to this interpretation, see Clark Butler, 'Hegel and Indirect Proof,' 75 *Monist* 422 (1991).
5. By linguistic ascent the analytical tradition means substitution of talk about language, e.g. reference, for talk in the ontological mode about things.
6. 'Quality, determinateness, has now been cast in relief. We at once have it as the determinateness of being [gerund]. Yet being is no longer alone, but refers immediately to the negative of itself. If we lay the emphasis on "is", we have reality. Quality is then reality as the determinateness of being [gerund]. What is negative, which is also contained in being there, is also determinateness, is also quality, but in the opposite form of not being.' *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 107.
7. Some German words possess 'not only different but opposite meanings, so that one cannot fail to recognize the speculative spirit of the language in them.' G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 32 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*].
8. Hegel to von Hoffmeister, Letter No. 55, in *Hegel: The Letters* 107 (Clark Butler & Christiane Seiler trans., 1984).
9. Grice distinguishes between 'what the speaker has said [the statement's truth conditions] ... and what he has "implicated"' (implied, indicated, suggested). Herbert Paul Grice, 'Utterer's Meaning, Sentence Meaning, Word Meaning,' 4 *Foundations of Language* 225 (1968).
10. 'Language belongs to human beings, and so has the character of thought. Thus we can say nothing that we merely intend [meinen] to say. If I say "That is my opinion" I think others do not hold the same opinion. For my opinion [*Meinung*] is only mine [*mein*] ... Yet when I speak I can only utter what is universal. If I say "This point here!" this point is at once all points everywhere in the world.' *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 14. Without entering into the correctness of Hegel's examples, we see that ordinary language means something whether we consent or not to that meaning.
11. 'Aufheben means [in German] to negate, [literally] to raise up [aufheben], which is at once to absorb [in what is higher – aufnehmen] and to preserve.' G.W.F. Hegel, *ibid.*, 106.

12. 'If we mean by a thing's "nature" all the truths about the thing, then plainly [according to Hegel] we cannot know a thing's "nature" unless we know all a thing's relations to all the other things in the universe.' Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of Knowledge* 144 (1959).
13. G.W.F. Hegel, *Review of C.F. Göschel's Aphorisms*, 17 CLIO 385 (Clark Butler trans. 1988), reprinted in G.W.F. Hegel, *Miscellaneous Writings*, (Jon Stewart ed., 2002).
14. 'To secure a meaning for an expression or type of expression, it suffices to determine the senses of all sentences in which it occurs.' Michael Dummett, 'Gottlob Frege,' in *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* 12 (2001).
15. 'If the parts pass as independent, they do not have the determination of being parts, since parts are parts only as parts of the whole.' *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 154.
16. '[T]here can be no question of a confirmation based on the *authority* of the ordinary understanding of the term [of the term 'Notion']; in the science of the Notion [of the concept] its content and character can be guaranteed solely by the *immanent deduction* ... ' *SL*, *supra* note 7, at 582.
17. I argue this in *Hegel and Indirect Proof*, *supra* note 4.
18. 'It is according to [the logic of] the concept [but not the logic of abstract essence] that difference as well as identity is present.' *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 139.
19. 'The abstract determination of being falls to the subject [of predication]. With that comes the determination of what has being. Here we have the activity of distinguishing, and in this distinguishing lies the particularity of the concept. First we have posited the concept in general, in its universality. Next the concept is posited in its particularity.' *Id.* at 182. Read: no matter how concretely the concept the concept has been posited in its universality, it is necessarily then posited in its further particularity.
20. 'Identity is something's, or someone's, oneness with itself, or with oneself. But it is in fact this oneness only as the negation of what is diverse [i.e. of what is diversely different from itself or from oneself].' *Id.* at 139. Analytic Hegelianism takes this negation of what is different to be the discovery of the thing's existence under different descriptions.
21. 'Essence is the negation [negativity] in which something or someone makes reference to itself or to oneself [as not being itself, as not being oneself].' *Id.*
22. '[T]he concept has, in reality, nothing but what belongs to it as its very own reality. That the concept and reality are other [than each other] is pure show. The concept [the Begriff as a conceptual grasp] intuit itself in intuiting reality. In intuiting reality, it has being for itself. It is other than itself in reality, but the conceptual grasp and intuited reality are also one and the same. I have a plan for a house when I announce what I want to do, but the plan is fully contained only in the house by which the plan is carried. [True] infinity lies in such a correspondence. The concept in this correspondence is beyond itself, it is no longer [abstractly] for itself on its own account, it finds itself in an other, in diverse appearances. And yet in this beyond it is by itself, it has thus returned within itself.' *Id.* at 22.
23. See Pierre Simon Laplace, *An Essay on the Philosophy of Probabilities* (1951).
24. '[T]he ground [as the foundation] at once supports the house. The house proceeds out of its ground, in differentiation and in opposition to it... . The house is a house insofar as it is not its ground. It is the other of its ground. In the ground we have all the determinations of essence, we have essence in its *totality*. Identity and difference, identity and non-identity, the positive and the negative come to be lifted beyond themselves. Their difference of each to the other comes to be lost. With that, the [thought]-determination of identity comes to be

posited in its totality. But identity is, within itself, repulsion. Ground is the *totality* of essence showing forth.' *Id.*, at 145.

25. *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 199.

26. Hegel, *Review*, *supra* note 13, at 385.

27. 'Something posited in relation to itself in contradistinction to something else is something with being in itself... . We thus have something in itself and also for something else.' *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 118.

28. 'As for the ontology in turn of the background theory, and even of the referentiality of its quantification – these matters *can* call for a [new] background theory in turn.' Willard van Orman Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* 67 (1969) (emphasis added).

29. 'We can give the logical determinations out to be definitions of God ...'. *Vorlesungen*, *supra* note 1, at 98. 'What we have here is a new definition of the absolute: the absolute is the essence ...'. *Id.* at 136.

30. *Id.* at 138.

31. *Id.* at 191.

32. 'It is according to [the logic of] the concept [but not the logic of abstract essence] that difference as well as identity is present [e.g. 'Cicero is Tully']. Therefore, [abstract] identity [e.g. 'Cicero is Cicero'] is a false, untrue [thought] determination, since it is what is merely one-sided, mere self-reference.' *Id.* at 139. 'Cicero is Cicero' is false only if understood as 'Cicero is merely Cicero.'

# 13

## Cognition and Finite Spirit

John W. Burbidge

If for Hegel the subjective logic completes the study of pure thought, how can he then include discussions of nature and spirit in his philosophy? Why does thought, which includes mechanism, chemism and the idea of life, have to extend its range to what we can call the philosophy of the real? To answer this question I have already compared what he says in the chapters on chemism and life with the chemical and organic sections of his philosophy of nature.<sup>1</sup> But the real world includes the realm of spirit; and in the introduction to his chapter on 'The Idea of Cognition' Hegel himself mentions his anthropology, phenomenology and psychology:

[T]he *Idea of spirit* as the subject matter of *logic* already stands within the pure science; it has not therefore to watch spirit progressing through its entanglement with nature, with immediate determinateness and material things, or with representation; this is dealt with in the three sciences mentioned above [anthropology, phenomenology and psychology].<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, although his doctrine of spirit in the *Realphilosophie* should include the 'object of normal *empirical psychology*'<sup>3</sup> it does not develop its task empirically but scientifically. The contingency of contemporary psychology is stressed in paragraph 378 of the *Encyclopedia*:

Empirical psychology has *concrete* spirit for its object, and because, with the renaissance of science, observation and experience have become the primary foundation for the cognition of the concrete, it has been practiced in the same way. As a result, on the one hand metaphysics [rational psychology] was retained outside of this empirical science and came to no concrete determination and content on its own; on the other hand empirical science concentrated its attention on the usual metaphysics of the understanding with its forces, diverse faculties and so on, and ostracized any speculative considerations.<sup>4</sup>



These 'speculative considerations' which are to grasp 'the unity of the determinations in their opposition'<sup>5</sup> will be the foundation for the scientific handling of the philosophy of spirit. So we have three disciplines which are to investigate spirit. *Empirical psychology* is to be distinguished from the *philosophy of spirit* in that it subordinates its observations and experiences to the abstract categories of force and spiritual capacities in an almost mechanical way, while the latter grasps the unity of the faculties in their diversity. The *logic of cognition* like the philosophy of spirit is scientific and speculative; the former, however, lies within the pure science of self-thinking thought, while the latter is concerned with the way spirit is conditioned by nature (anthropology), with its emergence as consciousness and self-consciousness (phenomenology) and with the developing mastery of its own content in representation and thought (psychology). How are these three different approaches – empirical, pure science, and spirit's entanglement with nature – related to each other?

In this chapter I propose to consider this question by investigating the scientific methods (in Hegel's sense) of the logic on the one hand and the doctrine of spirit on the other. How does one distinguish the speculative approach of unifying determinations in their diversity as it is practiced in the pure science of logic from the way it is practised in the philosophy of the real world? A short textual exposition of the chapter on cognition will provide a framework for understanding the pure logical method; we then decipher the distinctive role of the philosophy of spirit; finally, a comparison of the speculative character of the doctrine of spirit with contemporary empirical psychology will prepare us for some conclusions concerning the way the conceptual logic is related to the philosophy of the real world.

### The idea of cognition

Once in his lectures on the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel recalled the logical transition from life to the idea of cognition in the Logic. 'The death of the simply immediate, singular life is the *proceeding forth of spirit*.'<sup>6</sup>

This 'proceeding forth' is not to be understood corporeally but spiritually – not as a natural progression, but as the development of the concept, which sublates the onesidedness of the genus, unable [as it is] to come to an adequate actualization but rather through death showing itself as negative power over against that living actuality, as well as the opposing onesidedness of animal being, constrained in its singularity – sublating both of these into a singularity, universal in and of itself, or (which is the same thing) into that universal, existing on its own in a universal way, which is spirit.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, at the end of the logic of life, genus remains a subjective concept, whose actualization takes place through the death of the living

individual and the reproduction of the species. There thus develops a discrepancy between the simple universality of the genus and its actuality in an infinite progression of diverse individuals; the concept and its realization do not match. The idea, which was to be the unity of concept and objectivity, has fallen apart into a disparity which now needs to be overcome. In other words, 'concept and object are to correspond to each other' – an expression that regularly serves as the definition of cognition; for 'cognition' names the drive to overcome any discrepancy between concept and reality.

Governed by the idea of the true, conceptual thought distinguishes itself from its object and at the same time seeks to find a conceptual form appropriate to this other. This struggle develops through various stages.

At first thought seeks to grasp the object in itself without introducing any mediating activity. Because we are to initiate no conceptual distinctions, we should simply think not only the object in general but also any concrete properties that distinguish it from others, each on its own identified as an abstract universal. In this way thought analyses the given into its elements – a collection of diverse universals which, though derived from a single object, yet possess no conceptual connections with each other. Yet the object on its own is a whole of parts, a cause with effects. It contains within itself relationships which need to be identified if one is to satisfy the drive to truth. For the object itself is not just a collection of analysed properties, but rather a universal which determines itself in particular ways. As a result, the desired correspondence has not been reached. If we are to achieve the truth, conceiving must somehow mirror this objective synthesis.

The mediating activity of thought is defined by its three conceptual determinations: universality, particularity and singularity. In the first synthetic move – definition – the object is taken first as a *singular* so that it can then be subsumed by thought under a *universal* genus and then distinguished from others through its *particularities*. Although this approach may be productive for the objects of abstract reason (such as those of mathematics) it becomes problematic when thinking attempts to identify the determining features of objects in the real world. For what specifically distinguishes men from other animals (for example ear-lobes) could be quite inessential, and the universal genus could be associated with any common characteristic, whether contingent or necessary. So the rules for definition could produce something totally misleading, and the desired correspondence not be achieved.

If this approach starting with the object as singular cannot reach its goal, then perhaps we should start with it as a universal, going on to determine its particular components through division. As the second strategy of synthesis, division needs to be exhaustive in grasping all the diverse determinations of the object as a whole. Like definition, this initiative can be productive with regard to the abstract objects of conceptual systems; but it is regretfully ineffective when one turns to the concrete objects of nature

and society. After all, while we might realize that something is a dog, that general description tells us nothing about why it has the particular bone formation and teeth structure that it has. The conceived universal can capture what is common in the diverse objects, but it lacks a principle to determine what is essential among the characteristics it has.

This ineffectiveness in both definition and division can be overcome by constructing a theorem which sets out expressly the basis of the reciprocity between the universal and its particulars. But even though these hypotheses and theories can show possible relations between the diverse determinations of an object, it lacks complete correspondence. For it is only a subjective conceiving that constructs these connections; there is no guarantee that the object is in fact structured in the way proposed by thought. A carefully constructed hypothesis that explains all known facts need not be true, as the Ptolmaic astronomers discovered.

On its own, then, the idea of the true cannot accomplish its goal of getting its concepts to correspond to its objects. When we look back over this whole fruitless attempt, we notice that in every case we started with an object as given and looked for a way of making our concepts match what it is. One could, however, take the opposite tack and try to construct an object identical with our concepts. In place of the idea of the true, we now have the idea of the good.

The hope that this idea is able to achieve complete correspondence of concept with reality remains, however, equally unrealizable. For the objective world has its own structure and program; unaware of what the real is actually like, the practical idea encounters insuperable limits which defeat its purposes. As long as the practical idea of the good is separated from the theoretical idea of the true, it remains as ineffective as the latter whenever it is removed from self-conscious action. Each needs the other if a complete identification of concept with object is to be achieved. So the absolute idea – the idea ‘valid in all respects’ – is

the identity of the theoretical and the practical, each one of which *on its own* is yet one-sided, having the idea only as a desired beyond and unattained goal, each, therefore, a synthesis of striving, having as well as not having the ideal within itself, shifting from one over to the other, yet never bringing both thoughts together; rather leaving them in their contradiction.<sup>8</sup>

From this sketch of the chapter: ‘The Idea of Cognition,’ we can decipher the structure of Hegel’s systematic approach. As I see it, there are three important stages.

To articulate the essential features of any thought, we begin with an analysis of the original concept. We want to understand what it means. When this task is thoroughly carried out, we find that we have lost the

original sense of the concept – and reached its antithesis. This transition of thought into opposite determinations Hegel calls dialectic. So, in the terms of our example, analysis, definition, division, theory and the idea of the good all fail in their projects when we consider precisely what is involved.

Second, however, thought reflects on each transition as a whole, including its starting point and its results. It identifies the properties that generated this opposition and proposes a contrary approach to avoid it. Instead of analysis, synthesis; instead of starting from the singularity of the object, beginning from its universality; instead of making the concept correspond to the object, making the object correspond to the concept. This is the first, speculative, answer to the dialectical contradiction.

There is, however, a second speculative move. A theorem unites in one concept the two one-sided moments of definition and division. In a theoretical explanation thought starts as much from the singularity of the object as from its universality. Similarly the absolute idea brings together two one-sided moments: the theoretical and the practical idea. The theoretical leads to the practical and the practical equally to the theoretical. This reciprocity has a positive sense, for each one reinforces and needs the other within a self-contained equilibrium. In this new unity, each side's self-centred focus becomes completely transparent to the other, and the whole becomes a new thought which, in its turn, is a determinate simplicity or simple determinacy.

This integration is not merely a speculative synthesis. It rather creates a unity which can now be considered immediately in and of itself. It was Kant who distinguished synthesis from the unity of integration and ascribes the latter to the concept (instead of imagination) and to its faculty of understanding.<sup>9</sup> The understanding takes up the conceptual determinations of the newly integrated thought and fixes them by abstracting from all mediating processes of thought that have led to it.

## The doctrine of spirit

The three stages of dialectical, speculative and understanding reason make up the three sides of logical form<sup>10</sup> and, according to Hegel, the foundation of the systematic sciences. We can now ask how the philosophy of spirit takes over this logical form, so that the study of human nature does not remain merely empirical but becomes genuinely scientific. I concentrate here on Hegel's psychology.

The division of his psychology into theoretical and practical spirit reminds us of the logical distinction between the idea of the true and the idea of the good. The same relationship between the theoretical and the practical occurs also in the anthropology and the phenomenology: the natural soul is immediately determined by its surrounding nature, the feeling soul by its own nature; consciousness comes to terms with the object,

self-consciousness takes the object up into itself. At the end of the phenomenology (and so at the beginning of the psychology) there emerges the integration 'of the subjectivity of the concept and its objectivity and universality'<sup>11</sup> – of consciousness and its object – an integration that is reason: 'self-consciousness as the certainty that its determinations are just as much, objectively, determinations of the essence of the thing as its own thoughts.'<sup>12</sup> Thus the activities of spirit, which are to be the theme of the psychology, are not determined by anything external but relate 'only to its own determinations',<sup>13</sup> which are to be determinations at once of the self and of the object. Only later, in the science of objective spirit, do we become involved with the reciprocity between intelligence and will on the one hand and the surrounding world on the other.

As a result when the logical analysis of cognition is applied to the spiritual world matters become complicated. Conceiving's relation to the objective can be (1) naturally determined, (2) conditioned by the opposition between consciousness and object, (3) self-determining, and (4) actualized in the world. What makes each of these different from the others is not derived from the logic, but follows from the stages through which spirit comes to be in the real world – from its inherence in nature, through its conscious separation from it, to its self-conscious identification with it, and beyond to its actualization in worldly action.

A detailed analysis of Hegel's psychology provides further parallels between logic and the theory of spirit. In intuition where attention turns directly to the content of immediate feeling, it works *analytically*, placing that content in its own space and time.<sup>14</sup> Representation, in contrast, works *synthetically*, at first as the connection of a recalled image with an intuition, then as the various couplings of imagination in association, fantasy and sign, and finally as the unity of name and sense in memory. Like the theorem, thinking is to conceptually reconstitute the concrete relations among the recalled content through judgements and syllogisms.

Then, in practical spirit, the will seeks to provide its immediate practical feeling with objectivity, at first as drive and caprice, then as the totality of general satisfaction in happiness, which in the end needs the thinking of intelligence to be genuinely free.

Thus we discover an isomorphism between the logical idea of cognition and the psychology.

But we can extend the agreement between logic and the philosophy of the real even further. For the scientific nature of psychology lies in its detailed development. The immediate self-determination of spirit bifurcates into the opposition of attention and content, only to be reunited in intuition. The intuited image, divorced from its immediate place and time is retained subconsciously in the intellect until it is recalled by a new intuition, and the negative 'night-like pit'<sup>15</sup> is bound together with what is positively given. As the intellect progressively masters this synthetic activity, it

proceeds from the simple reproduction of contingent representations to free symbolic, allegorizing or poetic syntheses, finally identifying these synthetic connections with an arbitrarily chosen sign. We can recognize in these various types of imagination the division into simple, contrary and integrating stages which mirror a 'scientific' development. By retaining names, by reproducing the connection between name and sign without any intuition or image and finally by reciting mechanically, memory integrates word and substance in such a way that one can use names without any reference to a distinct meaning. In this way the distinction between the subjective activity of representing and its recalled content is overcome at a higher level, and we can proceed to thought, where we once again progress from simply conceiving through bifurcating and explanatory judgements to the integrating inferences which both determine the content and overcome the differences of form.

The same scientific development of simple beginning, transition into another, reflective bringing together and conceptual integration can be found in the section on practical spirit. Simple practical feeling is dispersed into diverse drives and arbitrary choices, to be ultimately brought together in happiness. The last section, free spirit, in its turn integrates the theoretical spirit of the intellect with the practical spirit of will.

In other words, for Hegel his psychology proceeds scientifically because simple beginnings pass over into opposed elements which are then brought together in a synthesis and finally integrated into a unity. The philosophy of spirit and the logic share the same theoretical structure.

Nonetheless there are significant differences. Several of Hegel's remarks on the relationship between his theory of spirit and empirical psychology provide a starting point for developing these differences. In the remark to *Enc.* §444 he writes that the empirical psychology of the Kantian philosophy (presumably he was thinking of Reinhold)

consists in nothing other than grasping and ordering the *facts* of human consciousness, indeed as *facts* just as they are *given, empirically*. With this situating of psychology, in which is mingled forms derived from the standpoint of consciousness and anthropology, nothing in its condition has altered, except for adding, with respect to metaphysics and philosophy in general as well as for spirit as such, the complete surrender of any cognition of the necessity of *what is in and of itself*, the surrender of both *concept* and *truth*.<sup>16</sup>

The distinction between scientific and empirical psychology, then, does not lie in the empirically given 'facts of human consciousness,' on which both are equally grounded, but in the cognition of the necessity of these facts – how they both conceptually and in reality are connected with each other. But this implies that, in contrast to the logic with which it shares

scientific necessity, the philosophy of spirit must incorporate psychological facts.

This peculiarity of the philosophy of spirit becomes clear once again in the remark to *Enc.* §442. Hegel here mentions Condillac's philosophy which worked through the developing stages of spirit not in a conceptual way but in an anthropological one 'according to which the faculties and powers are considered as emerging into existence one after another.'<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the approach of Reinhold, this is concerned with

making the *manifold* modes of activity of spirit understandable through their *unity* and with showing an interconnection of necessity. Only the categories used thereby are in general of a miserable type. The ruling determination is primarily that the sensible, correctly to be sure, be taken as primary, as the initiating foundation, but from this starting-point the further determinations appear to proceed in only an *affirmative* way, and the *negative* activity of spirit, whereby that material is spiritualized and overcome as sensible, is mistaken and overlooked. The sensible in that approach is not simply the empirically primary, but remains so, as if to become the genuine substantial foundation.<sup>18</sup>

Once again Hegel is stressing the systematic character of his psychology. The various stages are, as we have seen, ordered according to conceptual requirements. This requires in contrast to Condillac, giving a significant role to the negative. At the same time Hegel, like Condillac, presupposes that the sensible, the empirically given, must '*correctly to be sure*, be taken as primary, as the initiating foundation.' In other words, *any* theory of spirit must take the sensible seriously. For all that negativity is crucial, the various stages do not emerge in a strictly logical way following from nothing other than the conceptual requirements of whatever precedes. Empirical content is to be integrated into the conceptual framework. Hegel suggests that thought must reflect on what is given in experience – the sensible – and, using its negative resources, carefully distinguish the anthropological from the phenomenological and the psychological. Because the logic has demonstrated the significance of the negative, thought will be able to recognize how each stage differs from the others and how all the data can be organized into a schema of affirmative, negative and synthesizing stages. Thus conceiving becomes a critical faculty of judgement, which distinguishes the simple from the complex, identifies the negative of every affirmative, and correctly recognizes those activities that integrate the opposing moments. But this faculty is exercised on the sensible givens of experience.

Using a scientific approach to its subject matter enables thought, when looking for a starting point, to identify within the psychological activities the formless feeling that enables intuition to emerge only through the neg-

ative discrimination of attention from its content. Then intuition, now taken up into the intellect, disappears into the 'night-like pit'<sup>19</sup> of the sub-conscious, where it is not immediately noticed, yet must be presupposed if we are to explain a representation as involving recollection. These representations, negatively detached from any immediate intuition, ground the first unmotivated associations of reproductive imagination, which in turn can be subjected to the negative attention of the intellect and thereby be freely connected to each other in fantasy. The negative dynamic reaches its zenith when these general connections are referred to an arbitrarily chosen sign. By seeing how negations produce new positives, the critical judgement of conceptual thinking organizes the diverse empirical forms of intuition into a hierarchy.

In a similar way the negativity of conceiving recognizes that the empirical phenomena of mechanical memory makes possible the critical transition from a simple association of sign with meaning to the freedom of pure thinking; and again, how practical feeling must dissolve itself into sensibly experienced drives and caprice before the will can integrate the conflicting drives into the ultimate goal of happiness. Though the organization of this development comes from the logic, its content does not emerge from a priori thought, but from 'the sensible.'

In Hegel's Logic, thinking analyzes the inherent determinations of the concept in developing the scientific progression. In contrast, one finds in the psychology names and labels that can come only from empirical psychology: attention, intuition, image, association, fantasy, imagination, recollection, memory, thinking, drive, caprice and happiness. These names refer to activities which one finds only through the careful observation of spirit. They are not labels for a dialectical transition, a speculative reflection, or a conceptual understanding. So the philosophy of the real world takes up the data of what goes on in our intellect to then organize them within a scientific structure. In this way it is to be distinguished from empirical psychology, which collects observations without any clear understanding of its reflective presuppositions, and thereby not only mixes up anthropological, phenomenological and psychological data, but also overlooks the necessity which binds all these givens into a coherent unity.

Nonetheless the philosophy of spirit is to be distinguished from the philosophy of nature. In the latter it is philosophical reflection that *holds* the diverse chemical processes (for example) *together* in a conceptual unity when thought constructs a new elementary scientific starting point – the non-living organism. Since each natural stage does not change of its own into the next, the development takes place only 'in the inner idea which constitutes the ground of nature.'<sup>20</sup> Spirit, however, is already a living unity which maintains itself by continually articulating itself into independent faculties, powers and activities. In other words, the movement from simplicity through negation to integration lies implicit within spiritual life.



Because the dynamic unity of spiritual life is presupposed, it is not reason's task to integrate natural diversity (as in the philosophy of nature), but to differentiate carefully how the various isolated spiritual activities find their particular place within the whole. Philosophy's role lies more in discrimination than in construction. This is why we find that the conceptual pattern returns in diverse ways, for reason discriminates between more complex and simpler activities, and the particular way each develops that common structure.

## Conclusion

How does the conceptual logic's claim to completeness relate to the philosophy of the real world? The first thing to notice in answering that question is the way both share a systematic structure. They go over from an original simplicity to some relationship of contraries, from there not only to a synthesis of opposites, but also to a new immediate integrated concept that takes up the reciprocal synthesis into a unity. They differ in the way this structure is articulated. Within the logic an analytical thinking leads from the original category into its contrary; and then a second analysis leads this other back to the original concept. This reciprocity, which at first leads into an infinite regress, becomes the basis for a conceptual unity which can thereby be abstracted from its mediating conditions. Within the psychology thought discerns this pattern within the phenomena of human experience.

This agreement extends beyond the most general structure of scientific method. For pure thought recognizes specific patterns – mechanical, chemical, organic and cognitive – which follow from the internal significance of its own concepts. And these conceptual structures provide templates for understanding the diversity of the real world. In the philosophy of the real world, however, the development is no longer immanent within thought, as it is in the logic, but must account for the results of careful observation. When thinking through the philosophy of chemical nature, for example, we can anticipate logically that bodies oriented towards each other will generate chemical processes, and that these processes will mirror the three syllogistic forms of particular, singular and universal mediation. We can, however, predict neither what will be the most critical chemical elements nor the specific effects of the different processes nor the appearance of a fourth kind of process in elective affinity. Only after we have taken account of these experiences can philosophy integrate them with its conceptual presuppositions. And some of the 'surprising' results enable us to bring them together into a new categorial unity which provides a new template for investigation.

Similarly, within the theory of spirit, philosophy begins with the simplest and most immediate types of spiritual activity as they have emerged

from the previous analysis. In this way psychology begins with the most immediate self-determining acts of that intellect which has overcome the division between consciousness and object – which has moved beyond mere phenomenology. Thereafter it separates out and identifies those positive aspects and their negative presuppositions that can be distinguished within that starting point. These can then explain the explicitly integrating activity that results. Each emerging unity has its own simple character, and in its turn passes over into its negative counterpart, even though the specific nature of that negativity can be discovered only with reference to the real world. At each stage thinking identifies and separates out a new function which genuinely fulfils the expectations that thought entertains.

We can conclude our investigation in this way: although logical thinking offers the appropriate form for constructing the philosophy of the real world, the content comes from the world of actual experience, which is quite other than thinking. Each new stage begins with a concrete conceptual integration of these logical and empirical moments. It is this integration of logical thinking with experience which provides the advantage of philosophical psychology *vis-à-vis* the empirical. For it not only distinguishes and isolates each particular type of spiritual activity from the others, but also integrates them into their proper context within that unity which is spirit.

While the philosophy of nature is concerned with a contingent and dispersed otherness, the philosophy of spirit investigates that actuality which overreaches nature and so incipiently incorporates the systematic cohesion of reason.

At this stage, spirit is *finite* spirit, to the extent that the *content* of its determinations is something immediately given; a scientific description of this spirit has to set out the path within which it frees itself from these its determinations and progresses to grasping its truth – to grasping infinite spirit.<sup>21</sup>

## Notes

1. John W. Burbidge, *Real Process: How Logic and Chemistry Combine in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* (1996); John W. Burbidge, Hegel's Hat Trick, in 39–40 Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain 47 (1999).
2. 12 G.W.F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* 198 I. 25–29 (1968) [hereinafter cited as *HGW*]. In general, translations are my own, but compare G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 782 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*].
3. 12 *HGW*, *supra* note 2 at 198, I. 16–20; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 782.
4. 20 *HGW*, *supra* note 2, at 379–80; G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* § 378 (William Wallace & Arnold V. Miller trans., 1971) [hereinafter cited as *PM*].
5. 20 *HGW*, *supra* note 2, at 120; G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic* § 82 Remark (T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting & H. S. Harris trans., 1991) [hereinafter cited as *EL*].

6. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 221; *EL*, *supra* note 6, at § 222.
7. 1 Michael J. Petry, *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* 46 (1978).
8. 12 HGW, *supra* note 2, 236, l. 3–8 (emphasis added); *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 824.
9. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* A 76–80, B 102–15 (1781, 1787); Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 111–13 (Kemp Smith trans., 1953).
10. See 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 118–20; *EL*, *supra* note 6, §§ 79–82.
11. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 433; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 438.
12. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 434; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 439.
13. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 434; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 440.
14. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 444–5; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 448.
15. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 446 ('nächtlichen Schacht'); *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 453.
16. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 439; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 444 Remark.
17. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 436; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 442 Remark.
18. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 436–7; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 442.
19. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 446; *PM*, *supra* note 4, § 453 Remark.
20. 20 HGW, *supra* note 2, at 239; compare G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* § 249 (Arnold V. Miller trans., 1970).
21. 12 HGW, *supra* note 2, 198, l. 20–4; *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 782.

# 14

## The End of Hegel's Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method

Angelica Nuzzo\*

The last chapter of Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* is a test for the entire preceding logical development and, thereby, a test for the success of the book as a whole. It is only at this point – namely, at the conclusion of the itinerary of pure speculative–dialectical thinking – that it is possible (and necessary) for Hegel to demonstrate that the logic which has been immanently developed in its successive moments is, indeed, the speculative science laying the foundations of the philosophical system and leading on to a *Realphilosophie*. The aim of the final test taking place in the chapter on method is twofold. First, Hegel needs to show that the logical process now approaching its conclusion can by no means be exploited by a non-dialectical way of thinking. In other words, he needs to prove that only dialectical thinking can use or appropriate the logical process it has developed up to this point in order to construct knowledge and produce science. The claim to be justified is that the foregoing succession of logical forms is, indeed, the method of speculative thinking, and of this thinking alone. Second, Hegel needs to demonstrate that the logic, as a concluded and complete discipline, is a system and can therefore lead forward to the expanse of a system of philosophy. The two points are clearly connected as parts of the same systematic project. The notion of *method* designates, for Hegel, this constellation of issues; not only the question of how the succession of logical forms is immanently developed or deduced throughout the logic, but also the question of how, retrospectively, one shall reflect upon such a succession and how this reflection shall be used in order to produce knowledge, self-knowledge, and science. Method is both the immanent production of logical forms and the final comprehensive knowledge of the whole process of logical deduction.<sup>1</sup>

This is the interpretive framework within which I want to discuss the general problem posed by the last chapter of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, the chapter on the *absolute Idea*. Simply put: Why does Hegel's logic finish in the way it finishes, namely, with an account of the *absolute method*? Or, Why is the absolute idea developed into absolute method? And what

constitutes the necessity of this conclusion? The famous (or infamous) beginning of the logic has been the source of never ending attempts at interpretation and the difficult transition to nature has been criticized as no other part of the logic. Instead, I want to focus on the far less discussed problem of its conclusion – the problem of *the end* (*das Ende*). Why and how must the logic come to an end, and to which end? And more generally (and methodologically): What is the end (taken absolutely or *schlechthin*) – *das Ende*? Thus, my topic is the connection between logic, method, and end. It is only having cleared this connection that we can gain an access to the further problem of the transition to nature.

The last chapter of Hegel's Logic has not ceased to intrigue me despite the number of studies I have dedicated to different aspects of its argument during the last ten years. Somehow, the analysis of any section of the Logic has always brought me back to its conclusion. In the following considerations I build on the results of my previous research, in particular on the following three theses:

1. Hegel replaces the metaphysical Absolute with a theory of absolute cognition whereby knowledge of the Absolute turns into absolute knowing. He replaces the ontology of the *ens absolutus* with a logic of the absolute idea as absolute method. The term absolute for Hegel is no longer substantive but only adjective, as such absoluteness is predicated of each one of the final moments of his system: *absolute knowing* (*absolutes Wissen*), *absolute idea* (*absolute Idee*), *absolute spirit* (*absoluter Geist*).
2. The development of the absolute idea is determined by its initial definition as result of the previous logical movement. Accordingly, the absolute idea arises from the overcoming of the (Kantian) split between theory and praxis; it displays the identity of theoretical and practical idea, as well as the unity of the idea of life and the idea of knowledge.
3. The absolute method is the method of the system of philosophy. The method is in charge of laying the foundation for the systematic development of philosophical thinking and knowing. In this way, it effects the transition from Logic to *Realphilosophie*.<sup>2</sup>

These three theses, which I take here for granted, define the background of the position I am now going to outline. However, I will further elaborate on them, approaching them from the different perspective of the issue of the conclusion of the Logic – the issue of the necessity of a conclusion, as well as the issue of the specific necessary conclusion that Hegel has to offer.

I have mentioned the very general question I presently want to ask and the set of background assumptions through which I am asking it. I finally want to add that the specific direction taken by the following analysis is determined by a more particular concern that I see concentrated in an enigmatic passage placed at the very beginning of the chapter on the absolute

idea.<sup>3</sup> My present considerations are a sort of commentary on this passage. I attempt to frame the issue of the method of Hegel's logic in terms of the problem raised by that passage.

After having presented the absolute idea as the result of the immediately preceding movement whereby the idea is defined as the *rational concept* unifying theoretical and practical idea, life, and cognition, Hegel characterizes it as the form of *personality* truly reconciled with its other as with its own objectivity. In this way, the absolute idea has reached the highest form of truth. This fundamental characterization of the idea is the starting point of the final movement of the logic. Hegel gives this sense of culmination by construing a radical opposition to the absolute idea (and notice that he has just claimed that despite its multiple conciliations, the absolute idea bears '*in itself* the highest opposition').<sup>4</sup> Hegel declares: '*All the rest* is error, confusion, opinion, endeavor, arbitrariness, and transitoriness; only the absolute idea is being, imperishable life, self-knowing truth, and is *all* truth.'<sup>5</sup> This passage is puzzling for more than one reason. First, it is syntactically construed in a curious way. The opposing member somehow precedes that to which it is opposed; the rest precedes that in relation to which what is left is understood as rest – a resulting *caput mortuum* brings forth the absolute idea as all truth. Yet the *caput mortuum* is obtained from the idea. Second, this passage has always struck me as being highly un-dialectic, and un-dialectic in the most implausible place within the logic. Hegel's main point in this last chapter is to establish the absolute idea as an omni-pervasive structure – *übergreifend*, he says<sup>6</sup> – that includes all opposition within itself. Its absolute character is determined precisely by the fact that there is no exteriority or externality opposed to it.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the absolute idea as method is defined as the force of infinite power from which nothing can be declared independent, to which everything with no exception is by necessity subjugated (*unterworfen*).<sup>8</sup>

How can these claims be reconciled with the notion that there is indeed something, a whole realm of negativity, that remains as an uncomfortable rest (*übrig*) placed in front of the absolute idea and opposed to it in a sort of un-dialectical Manichaeism – all truth against all the rest? How can we accept that this discarded realm must somehow present itself in this external opposition in order for the absolute idea to shine in all its transparency and might as the omni-pervasive and comprehensive truth, as all truth? Is this a passage that we need to ignore if we want to move on to the characterization of the dialectical nature of Hegel's method? Or shall we instead acknowledge that herein Hegel somehow provides the key for the following development of the absolute idea to method, and then to the end of the logic as foundation of the philosophical system? If the latter is the case, how does such development take place? My suggestion in these considerations is that this passage formulates the specific problem that Hegel's idea of method sets out to solve. But there are additional important questions

that this passage raises and that we should be able to address, as well. What does Hegel indicate with the 'all the rest (*alles Übrige*)'<sup>9</sup> immediately declared error, confusion, opinion, arbitrariness? And where is this rest systematically located?

In the following analysis, I address the problems posed by this passage, engaging with the text in an interlocutory way. I will formulate and reformulate a series of questions in order to cover the entire development of the last chapter of the logic, which, I show, should be considered Hegel's answer to the issue raised by that initial passage – the issue of *das Ende*. I want to pursue the following thesis: Hegel's absolute method is not only the immanent way in which the logical process is step-by-step generated and the way in which this immanent production is successively presented – method is not only *Entwicklungsweise* and *Darstellungsweise*. In the logic, the method constituting the end of the process is also the way in which the entire logic is finally reflected upon and retrospectively re-construed in order to be used in cognition and action by speculative thinking. The method as conclusion of the logic offers a synoptic reconstruction of the entire logical process that breaks with the sequence in which its forms have been immanently generated so far. Such reconstruction proceeds according to the syllogism of the method; by reading the process out of sequence, so to speak, it grounds the necessity of the logic as system – a necessity that the sequence of the logical forms could still not guarantee. Thus, Hegel concludes the logic in a way that reminds one of the conclusion of the *Encyclopaedia* with the three syllogisms. At the end of the logic, the absolute method provides the only speculative knowledge of what the logic proved itself to be. To this extent, the method is a first occurrence of the *noesis noeseos* (thought thinking itself) that seals the *Encyclopaedia*.

### **The absolute idea and 'All the Rest ...'**

Following a general strategy employed throughout the logic, the absolute idea's first definition is a genetic one. Thereby continuity with the preceding process is established. As a result, the absolute idea cumulatively recapitulates the whole development of the subjective logic displaying the trajectory that developed the concept to idea by realizing it. And yet, in the absolute idea, which results from the previous logical movement, such movement has not yet reached its conclusion. The genetic deduction of the concept of absolute idea is necessary, but not sufficient, to determine the absolute idea to method (or to *absolute form*). In order for this final stage of the logic to be presented as a new moment requiring its own internal development up to the point that secures the end of the entire first sphere of the system of philosophy – in order for this objective to be reached – a radical discontinuity must be created. This is a particularly difficult and particularly interesting task precisely because the absolute idea seems to be

by definition the *sum total* (or the *Inbegriff*) of the logical process. Ultimately, the absolute idea is presented by Hegel as identical with the logic itself. But if this identity between absolute idea and logical science holds true, what else can the idea be (or be developed into) at this point? How can the necessary and non-tautological relation between absolute idea and method be established? If, following the traditional (and Kantian) division of the logical science in a Doctrine of Elements and a Doctrine of Method we want to claim that the idea is method, it can be method only as external form, as a form externally juxtaposed to the material previously deduced in its completeness and adding nothing to it. But Hegel programmatically rejects this view. On Hegel's account, the end of the logic is reached by the absolute method, not by the absolute idea that results from the forging movement.

The argument at this point is the following: the fact that the absolute idea is identical to the development of the logical science (is its one and only object)<sup>10</sup> *contradicts* its absolute value – it does not constitute it. To this extent, the idea bears indeed the highest opposition within itself: presenting itself as absolute the idea is not truly absolute. In order for the last moment of the logic to prove itself really absolute, it must be demonstrated first that the idea is not coextensive with everything (everything there is and can be thought), and second that what constitutes the absolute idea is not restricted to the preceding movement. In other words, if the absolute idea is the highest truth and '*all truth*,' and if '*the absolute idea alone is being*'<sup>11</sup> (in the sense of truth), not everything there is and can be thought is truth or being (in the sense of truth). Neither on individual logical moments nor on the sum total of the deduced forms truth and being can be predicated as they can be predicated on the absolute idea – namely, in an absolute way. In point of fact, the claim '*the absolute idea alone is being*'<sup>12</sup> implies a fundamental restriction of focus that radically outdistances the last moment of the logic from all the preceding ones – individually, as well as collectively considered. The absolute idea is radically different from all that precedes it. '*Being, pure being*' with which the logic begins (or has begun) is, in a sense, a more comprehensive concept than that of the absolute idea at the beginning of the last chapter of the logic. And yet, the absolute idea also comprehends, and at the same time exceeds, what has been developed so far, so as to put itself in the position of uniqueness that allows it to bring the logic to an end. Its focus is both narrower and broader than that of the previous development (the absolute idea is concrete universality and the singularity of personality). In an important way, *das Logische* is only one side or one aspect of the absolute idea.<sup>13</sup> Even though in its universality the absolute idea embraces all particulars, it displays a '*not yet (noch nicht)*'<sup>14</sup> that now calls for further investigation. It is only in this way that the end of the logic can return back to its beginning and close the circle of the science (but this will be clear only at the end of the story).



The radical difference or discontinuity separating the absolute idea from the preceding process is thereby indicated. In order for the last movement of the logic to accomplish the 'extension'<sup>15</sup> of *das Logische* to the form of the system – and even to the 'system of totality'<sup>16</sup> – the absolute idea must be first circumscribed so as to include, and simultaneously exclude, all preceding forms, so as to be identical with and radically different from them. It follows that the absolute idea as the result of the preceding movement must somehow be able to place this whole movement outside of itself. Hence, the idea's opposition to 'all the rest.' The absolute idea is the one and only point of truth and being against which all the rest is nothing else but 'error, confusion, opinion, endeavor, arbitrariness, and transitoriness.' Thereby, a first sense of the specific *absoluteness* of the idea is gained – the etymological sense of the *absolutus* justified. The idea is separated or disconnected from the preceding movement (from the movement from which it results) in order to recuperate it in a new comprehensive perspective. This is the condition for the further advancement that determines the absolute idea to method and that proves it omni-pervasive by extending it retrospectively to the circle that reaches the empty beginning.

To be sure, the negative rest that separates the idea from the movement that led to it should not be understood ontologically but rather *methodologically* (the present opposition is no longer the initial identity/opposition between *being* and *nothing*). 'All the rest' opposed to the idea that *alone* is being and truth indicates the whole preceding logical movement that, without the absolute idea as method, is inexorably reduced to mere error, opinion, and transitory untruth. This is the absolute necessity of the last moment of the logic. The opposition between the absolute idea and the negativity of 'all the rest' can be viewed as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the claim that the logic could be concluded with the absolute idea as it results from the preceding movement; or as an indirect refutation of the claim that the method does not really add anything to the logical movement and hence, is a mere external form – a coda to it. The idea is proved really absolute and absolutely necessary if, and only if, without it (or set merely in opposition to it) all preceding forms, and even the logic as a whole, can be reduced to the sheer negativity of that rest (which means precisely that up to this point no real absoluteness has been gained). To this extent, the movement of the absolute idea is necessary because it provides the only true method according to which the logic can be established as true speculative science.

The idea is the method that conclusively reconstructs or rethinks, and knows the entire preceding movement as truly speculative, thereby salvaging it from error, opinion, transitoriness, etc. Or, to put it differently, up to the point in which the idea is successfully developed as absolute method, the logic can still fall prey to non-dialectical thinking, external '*begrifflose Reflexion*,' and mere finite knowledge, missing entirely its objective, namely,

the foundation of a system of science. In this way, the last chapter of the logic is, indeed, the decisive test of its soundness.

Herein the question that we need to address is: How does the method manage to rescue the entire logical development from the possibility of its being hijacked by external reflection? Hegel's new conception of method is the response to a situation of radical risk, the risk that the logic immanently developed up to this point could be reduced to mere error because of its being reframed within a merely instrumental conception of method; the risk that the openness that the absolute idea still displays could be exploited by an inconclusive progress *ad infinitum* unable to reach an end. Despite the fact that the logical forms have, indeed, been derived all along in an immanent dialectical way, it would still be possible for the entire logic at this final stage to be appropriated by un-dialectical thinking and reconstructed according to a method that is nothing more than an external form. This possibility would jeopardize the philosophical project which Hegel embraces as early as 1807 – the project of presenting the absolute as a result.<sup>17</sup> On this project, in turn, hinges his idea of a philosophical system of science grounded on a speculative science of logic. In the logic, at the height of its last chapter, this possibility translates into the failure to bring the logical movement to its necessary end (i.e. into the risk of both an open-ended progress *in infinitum* and an entirely arbitrary beginning).

To sum up our results so far, in order for the absolute idea to become absolute method and hence, to effectively bring the logic to conclusion, the focus of the idea must be restricted, and a radical discontinuity with the entire preceding movement created. The idea alone is being and truth, means that all the rest – all the preceding development of the logic – is reduced to mere opinion and untruth (i.e. is a movement that by no means can claim to be absolute or conclusive). The method is not external form but the necessary culmination and the true foundation of the process. Yet the method can be absolute form only if the preceding movement can be considered as external to it and untrue without it. I now turn to the closer analysis of this latter claim.

### External form and absolute form

At stake in this last movement of the logic is the necessity of Hegel's speculative-dialectical idea of method and the thesis that the absolute as end of the process is not just absolute idea but is absolute method as absolute form. The claim here is that *only* the method can be absolute form.<sup>18</sup> For only the absolute method – none of the intermediary logical moments or the entire preceding process – is able to bring the logical process to its conclusion. If the method is conceived as merely external form enacted by an external undialectical reflection, every intermediary moment can, in principle, be posited as absolute, and consequently the logic can be seen as concluded on

occasion of each of those absolutes. But the immanent succession of the logical forms, their necessary dialectical transition into one another, already proved this claim to absoluteness false. In a note to the transition from the true infinite to *Fürsichsein* in the logic of being (a note whose principal thesis is taken up again in the note to *Sein-für-Eins*, the first moment of *Fürsichsein*),<sup>19</sup> Hegel formulates the *principle of idealism* as the key criterion according to which the dialectic-speculative character of every philosophy ought to be assessed. The only crucial point in such an assessment, Hegel notices, is the 'question of *to what extent* is that principle being realized,'<sup>20</sup> of how far it has been carried through. This means to assess whether the transition to the following moment has been accomplished or whether, instead, a certain moment is declared absolute and the logical process consequently brought to a halt. It is only in the last chapter of the logic that the method is able to determine how the end of the speculative process can be made. In this case, and in this case only, we can say that the principle of idealism is carried through *to the end*.

Hence, on Hegel's account, the false assumption that each intermediary moment of the process can be posited as an absolute is ultimately predicated on a view of method as merely external form. But if, on the contrary, the true absolute is none of the logical moments (and not even their collection) but only the method according to which each moment and the entire progress is retrospectively reconstructed and known (besides having been generated by it), then each intermediary form, as well as the whole development of all such forms, if posited outside of the absolute method, becomes a merely external, arbitrary, and untrue station in relation to it. In other words, if compared to the absoluteness of the method all the rest is indeed error, confusion, transitoriness, etc. Hence, the demonstrative aim of the last chapter of the logic is to prove that the logical process can achieve its necessary end only in a retrospective reconstruction of the whole logical process that is able to rescue it from the external form that reflection could still impose on it by declaring each moment a possible – yet entirely arbitrary – conclusion. The thesis is: absolute method is absolute form.

The determinateness [*Bestimmtheit*] of the idea and the whole course of this determinateness has been the object of the logical science – from which course the absolute idea itself has issued *for itself*. For itself, however, the idea has shown that the determinateness does not have the figure of a content but is absolutely as form.<sup>21</sup>

Thereby Hegel spells out the dialectic situation that leads the absolute idea to the first stage of the development of the method. The absolute idea as mere form is method. The determinateness of the idea is the object *in fieri* of the logic. As topic of the logical movement, however, the determina-

tions that issue from it are not yet determinations of the idea. For the idea is only result. The object of the logic does not exist until the end of the logic is achieved. It is only from the entire development of the logical science that the idea arises in its final absolute determinateness. The idea is here for itself and gains an independent existence whose determinateness can be thematized for the first time. However, this conclusive determinateness somehow comes out as a surprise. If the task, in the case of the metaphysical Absolute (which Hegel ironically exposes in the logic of essence), is to show what the Absolute is, to express it and to manifest it (the Absolute is *Äußerung*),<sup>22</sup> then with regard to the absolute idea we need to acknowledge that there is no content expressed and (still) to be expressed. The absolute idea is no content but a mere form, purely self-referential expression with nothing to express except its own formality. This form, indeed an absolute one, is the first side of the method; the method as formal mode (*Art und Weise*), as modality or mode of being and knowledge at the same time. Thereby the claim that the absolute idea is method corrects Spinoza's metaphysical claim addressed in the logic of essence that the Absolute is mode.<sup>23</sup>

### The method according to the form: *Anfang* and *Fortgang*

The entire development of the logic<sup>24</sup> shows that no content can be assumed as true foundation of the logical development, since, if taken up in this function, it proves to be sheer untruth condemned to a necessary transition to the successive moment.<sup>25</sup> To this extent, the previous logical course set in relation to its result is indeed untrue and transitory. Hegel argues that if a determinate form were to be recognized as the foundation then the 'absolute form would relate to it as a merely external and contingent determination'<sup>26</sup> – the absolute form would not be absolute. On the contrary, since no foundation has been encountered so far, and since the method is not a particular content but universal form, the method is 'the absolute foundation and the *last* truth.'<sup>27</sup> Hence, it must be first developed according to this formal aspect. Method, Hegel declares, is the movement and activity of the concept that knows of no external resistance or opposition.<sup>28</sup> Method is both 'internal and external mode.'<sup>29</sup>

It is only at this point that the logical movement – previously reduced to a negative rest set against the absolute form – starts to be rethought and reappropriated by the moments of method. In this process the previous development is rearranged according to the logic of the method – first formally, according to the structures of beginning (*Anfang*) and advancement (*Fortgang*), and then with regard to the content, according to the moment of *Ende*. Ultimately, this reflective process yields speculative knowledge of what the logic is. At this point, Hegel presents us with a gesture that is very similar to the one that concludes the *Encyclopaedia* in the famous

three syllogisms. At the end of the logic, the syllogism of the method offers a recollection and final reconstruction or rearrangement of the entire logical development according to a new logic that is the logic of the method, or the logic of the conclusion. Against the force of *this* final reconstruction – as opposed to the initial position of the absolute idea as a result – nothing can present itself as an impenetrable rest.<sup>30</sup> The development of the method shows the way in which the previous logical content must be reappropriated in order to constitute the system laying the foundation of speculative science.

In following this development, I will bring to the fore the way Hegel responds point by point to the challenge of external reflection, thereby undermining the possibility that the logic be transformed in a process of triumphing opinion, arbitrariness, *Streben*, and transitoriness. In the final movement of the absolute method, truth takes the place of opinion and necessity replaces arbitrariness, while the circularity of the end reaching back to the beginning defeats the open-ended *Streben* of the bad infinite that, once it has begun moving forward, is unable to find its necessary conclusion, and moving backwards, is unable to reach an ultimate foundation. The end of the process finally dismantles the possibility that a non-dialectic conception of method could still appropriate what the logic has presented up to the absolute idea. In articulating the structure of the method in its different moments, Hegel proposes to rearrange the entire logical process according to these new forms in the syllogism of the method. The task is to show that only by re-reading and systematizing the logic in this way are the dangers of arbitrariness, error, *Streben*, etc., eliminated and speculative knowledge of the logic finally achieved. The method that institutes the logic as speculative foundation of science can finally become a method of the system of philosophy. Thus, only by reaching its end can the logic lead on to a *Realphilosophie* – a philosophy of nature and spirit.

The first moment of the method taken in its formal aspect is the beginning (*Anfang*). Methodologically, there is a formal beginning of the logic as a whole and there are different intermediary beginnings along its development. What is it that structurally and formally characterizes the beginning as such – no matter what the beginning is in its content-determination (it can be alternatively '*Sein, Wesen, Allgemeinheit*',<sup>31</sup> or it can be 'a content of being or of essence or of the concept'<sup>32</sup>)? On Hegel's account, the general problem of the beginning is to overcome the arbitrariness to which instrumental conceptions of method inevitably condemn it.<sup>33</sup> In its content, the beginning (the beginning as such, as well as all beginnings) is, indeed, characterized by being an 'immediate (*Unmittelbares*)' that has the form of 'abstract universality'.<sup>34</sup> As moment of the method, however, 'the beginning has no other determinateness than this: being simple and abstract.'<sup>35</sup> But how does the simple immediacy and abstract universality of the beginning translate into a methodological issue? The question, for Hegel, con-

cerns the (reflective) meaning of the claim that the beginning is simple and abstract. Once the beginning has been made and the logic developed out of it, the issue is: How should such a beginning be understood in order for the logic to be able to reach its conclusion? In other words, the question is no longer the one that Hegel posed at the beginning: 'With what must the science begin?'<sup>36</sup>

In the last chapter of the logic, Hegel's suggestion is that immediacy and abstractness are not characters that define the content of a certain beginning (not even those of *Sein*, *reines Sein* which is lack of all content). Immediacy and abstractness are rather the very modality with which logical thinking begins to know what logical thinking is. At the level of the method, Hegel's concern is not *Sein* as beginning (or what should constitute/constitutes/has constituted the beginning) but the way in which the beginning is made in order for the end to issue.<sup>37</sup> Hegel notices that *external reflection*, while embracing the claim that the beginning is simple and abstract put forth by speculative thinking, accepts such beginning only for the sake of a promised – opined – content, which it strives to further develop. Thereby, the beginning is transformed into an arbitrary assumption (or into a provisional or merely hypothetical beginning) made only in order to satisfy the *Streben* of thinking aimed at moving on away from it. Moreover, mere opinion in its lack of consciousness (*Bewußtlosigkeit*) defines the *simple* and *abstract* character of the beginning as a content that is actually given ('*es gibt*'),<sup>38</sup> either in reality or in thinking.

On the contrary, the method, which is the 'consciousness of the concept',<sup>39</sup> understands the simplicity and abstractness of the beginning as its mere formality, namely, as the objective, immanent form that is in itself defective (*mangelhaft*) and endowed with the drive (*Trieb*) to realize the concept. In other words, the illusion of *Streben* affecting the beginning (but truly affecting external reflection) is overcome once we recognize that such *Trieb* is nothing else but the very immanent form of the beginning as moment of the method. Granted that the beginning is simple, immediate, and abstract, if we do not acknowledge that *Anfang* is not a content that happens to be given to thought, or that thinking chooses in order to make its beginning, but is instead moment of the absolute method (the logic must begin or have begun since we have reached its end), the beginning is destined to be arbitrary, a mere striving, a sheer opinion. From this incorrect view it also follows that the advancement is a mere *Überfluß* lacking all necessity,<sup>40</sup> that thinking is carried on only by an external striving that would be utterly superfluous were it not for the unfortunate emptiness of the beginning. The beginning could very well have been the absolute in which case there would have been no need to proceed at all.

Thereby the first moment of the method leads to the second. The second moment of the method considered in its formality is the advancement (*Fortgehen*). The beginning is beginning of a process, an '*Anfang des*

*Fortgehens und der Entwicklung.*<sup>41</sup> Here, as well, the absolute method is opposed to the way in which finite, mere searching knowledge construes its advancement. Such a way, Hegel suggests, entails a fundamental error. It reveals thinking's *abirren*, the merely random searching about with no direction and no necessity with which thinking tries to escape the emptiness of the beginning. To be sure, the immanent development of the logic (or what the logic has achieved up to this point) has already responded to this erroneous way of constructing science. Now, however, the method has to thwart the further possibility that external reflection may reconceptualize the preceding movement according to that erroneous view of the advancement.

This is an important point because it indirectly dismantles so many interpretations of Hegel's logic. An example is offered by the teleological construction of the logic as a movement in which progress is made only because a certain result has to be obtained – whereby the anticipated end result would allegedly retroactively guide the constitution of the process away from the beginning. Arguing against this position, Hegel contends that in order for the advancement to be made thinking should not aim at anything else or look for anything else besides attending to a firm consideration of the determinations of things 'in and for themselves.'<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, *Streben* and *Trieb*, for Hegel, indicate the formal character of the beginning (and even that of the end), not the character of the advancement. For Hegel, progress is made by staying where one is, not by looking away, aiming at something else. Hegel expresses this character of the method by saying that 'the absolute method is analytic.'<sup>43</sup> Even though the beginning, as such, has no determination and even though there is no proper searching in the method, the method finds in the universal of the beginning the (different or new) determination with which progress is made. This dialectical paradox reveals the synthetic nature of the method. The consideration of the logical form *in and for itself* – a consideration that has no further aim or need – indicates the *otherness* that necessarily resides within that very same form;<sup>44</sup> it points to the fact that each determination is as such a contradiction, and consequently entails a necessary *Übergehen*.<sup>45</sup> *Fortgang* is a transition accomplished without aiming at anything else but at what one already has, because what one has is a contradiction.

Thus the second moment of the absolute method brings to the fore its *dialectic* negativity. As moment of the absolute method, dialectic loses the appearance of contingency and exteriority that afflicts ancient dialectic, skepticism, and Kantian philosophy alike.<sup>46</sup> On Hegel's account, dialectic is the 'standpoint in which a universal first, considered in and for itself reveals itself as the other of itself.'<sup>47</sup> Throughout the development of the logic, the dialectic of logical determination has been responsible for the immanent construction of the logical itinerary. In considering dialectic as the second moment of the form of the method –



that is, as the way of knowing or conceptualizing what the logic is and has achieved – Hegel suggests that a last step still needs to be accomplished in order to fully understand the force of dialectical thinking. At this point, dialectic regards the way in which the entire previous development is re-conceptualized – the way in which the progressive sequence of its forms is redesigned according to the logic of the first, the second, and the third/fourth moments of method; namely, the logic of the immediate, mediation, and the mediated term. This is the final perspective offered by the method. The question that Hegel asks is the following: What is it that all second moments of the logic – despite their specific content – structurally or formally have in common? The (short) answer to this question is: they are contradictions whereby advancement is made and a transition effected.

What interests me herein is, more specifically, Hegel's argument in favor of the ulterior step that the dialectical moment of the method must undertake beyond the immanent production of the logical forms that took place throughout the preceding sequence. In these conclusive pages, the method offers a synoptic view of the logic. In this synopsis, dialectic must be recognized at work even when the logical succession is erased and reconfigured according to the different order dictated by the method's syllogism. The immanent development of the logical forms grounds its necessity and partial truth with regard to their respective positions within the sequence but does not justify the necessity of the whole itinerary – and in particular does not justify the end of the entire development. At the beginning of the absolute idea chapter,<sup>48</sup> such itinerary appears, as it were, as the negative rest lacking necessity and truth, and still opposed to the idea, still needing to be subjugated (*unterworfen*)<sup>49</sup> to the method. It is only the reconfiguration of the logic according to the syllogism of the method that eventually grounds the necessity of the whole logical science as a system. A methodological, synoptic reading of the logic out of sequence must be performed in order for it to reach its conclusion in the figure of a circular system. Thus, the second dialectical step of the method reduces the necessity of the logical progression to mere contingency and thereby negates it; then replaces that progression with the different sequence dictated by the syllogism of the method, and finally sanctions the true necessity of the logical development by leading it to the form of the system.

In discussing the new synoptic sequence of second moments all characterized by the immanent negativity of dialectic, Hegel draws the following conclusion: 'Hence, if the negative, the determinate, the relation, judgment, and all the determinations that fall under this second moment do not appear for themselves already as the contradiction and as dialectic, it is merely because of the insufficiency of thinking that does not bring together its thoughts.'<sup>50</sup> Thereby, Hegel formulates the further point that the method makes in addition to the immanent production of the sequence of logical forms realized up



to the determination of the absolute idea. It is not sufficient to bring out the succession of logical determinations, which is what the logic has done throughout its development. In addition, it is necessary to bring together those forms (synoptically as it were), recognizing their belonging to the second, dialectic moment of the method. Now, the activity of gathering together (*Zusammenbringen*) is precisely the activity of syllogism. Hegel's suggestion is that it is possible to have followed through the entire development of the logic in the immanent necessity produced by the inner contradiction of each moment, and yet be unable to recognize what constitutes the dialectic (or the advancement) proper to the method of the logical sequence; still be unable to understand what the logic as a whole has achieved as a result. Thus, in order for the logic to reach its conclusion in the form of the system, the logical progression needs to be rethought so that its determinations are brought together according to the syllogism of the method. In this way, the method provides the 'cognition of the result (*Erkennen des Resultats*)' produced by the logical development.<sup>51</sup> At stake is the fundamental issue of knowing what the logic has done or what the logic properly is. Such dialectic-speculative knowledge is method.

Hegel's claim that the method is both analytic and synthetic (the analytic and the synthetic moment constituting the two premises of the syllogism)<sup>52</sup> means precisely that the method does not simply analyze retrospectively the given determinations and the process that has produced them and in which they previously have been presented.<sup>53</sup> This is because in the method, analysis yields a result that is different from the one previously obtained (the end of the logic is not the absolute idea but the moment of the end itself). Properly, there is no result to analyze when the analysis of the result sets out to its task. The result arises instead from analysis revealing itself as synthesis. That is, in its being analytic, the method is synthetic as it adds something new to the preceding development. Cognition of the result (the logic) produces the end result (the end of the logic).

### **The method according to the content: system and end**

The method disrupts the immanent logical sequence and establishes a new relationship among logical determinations and their foundation.<sup>54</sup> Simply put, what comes last is truly the first; only the method is the absolute; method is the foundation of the entire logical development – of both beginning and advancement.<sup>55</sup> But when the method is recognized as the foundation of the logical progression, this progression is reshaped according to a new methodological relation, namely, the relation between beginning and advancement. At this point, the content entails for the first time the consideration of the method.<sup>56</sup> The method is articulated according to its own content and this leads to the 'extension'<sup>57</sup> of the method 'to a system.'<sup>58</sup> At stake now is the issue of the conclusion of the logic (*das Ende*).

Hegel's suggestion is that the method is speculative-dialectic knowledge of the material produced by the immanent process of logical determination. Method is not just immanent production but also reflective cognition – the only true speculative cognition – of the result of the syllogism. The formal syllogism of the method is deduction of the content.<sup>59</sup> In the new relation that the method establishes among the logical forms by rearranging them according to its moments in the comprehensive structure of the syllogism, the beginning is finally connected to the result of the advancement.<sup>60</sup> Thereby the beginning is no longer immediate, but rather determinate; it is not mere form but demonstrated content, while the advancement proceeds to and from the mediated standpoint of a new beginning. And yet, at this point, the possibility of a disruptive, non-dialectic reading of the results of the method surfaces again, thereby disclosing a double threat to the conclusiveness of the logical development. The '*begriffslose Reflexion*'<sup>61</sup> is ready to encroach on the results of dialectic, transforming the mediation of the beginning into the open-ended regress of an inconclusive proof and turning the conquest of a new beginning into an advancement that stretches forward *ad infinitum*.<sup>62</sup>

Against this final possibility – and against this ultimate error – Hegel's absolute method construes the argument in which the logic will reach its conclusion. Only the structure of the system is able to defeat with its circularity the linear progression of the bad infinite for which no end is in view and no beginning is a necessary beginning. (This is yet another consequence of the claim that sets a certain logical form as the absolute, or as the foundation, and reduces method to external form.) Herein, the difference that separates the formal moments of beginning and advancement from the moment of the end comes to the fore. While external reflection still operates within the methodological framework of a beginning and an advancement, it can by no means provide an end to the process. The end is the uniquely speculative moment of the absolute method. As Hegel puts it at the end of the *Encyclopedia* logic, 'the infinite progress dissolves itself in the end' (*löst sich in das Ende [auf]*).<sup>63</sup> The end is the methodological construction of the logic to 'system of totality'<sup>64</sup> – to 'circle of circles.'<sup>65</sup>

The opposition between absolute method and *begriffslose Reflexion* reveals how the speculative method is at work in bringing beginning and advancement to the necessary end of the logical movement. First, unlike external reflection, the method determines the formal indeterminateness of all beginnings (of such 'beginnings such as being, essence, universality')<sup>66</sup> to their very content and, indeed, to their determinateness (formal indeterminateness is precisely the content-determination of the beginning).<sup>67</sup> From this the contradiction arises that effects the mediation of the immediate beginning and, with it, brings the process to the methodological moment of the advancement.<sup>68</sup> Second, having the method as its permanent foundation, the advancement is no longer a linear progression (a *Fließen*) from one

determination to another; rather it is the cumulative process through which the universal is enriched in its particularization. Thereby, all second moments are synoptically rearranged with regard to their content: reality, the particular, and judgment. The content becomes more and more concrete; no determination is left behind or lost. The linear progression is overcome in an organic structure (a sphere) that grows on itself.<sup>69</sup> Considered as the true foundation of the logical process, the method articulates a second syllogism, which, this time, is not merely formal but is content-determined.<sup>70</sup> This syllogism extends the method to the further determination of 'a system of totality.'<sup>71</sup> In this last systematic syllogism of the method, the analytic moment is the universal that communicates (*mitteilt*) itself to all particulars, the analytic universal that sees the one immanent in the many. The synthetic moment is instead *Bereicherung*, the movement that, gaining content, constitutes the synthetic universal in which many are immanent in the one totality as its parts. The twofold movement of this syllogism is expressed by the convergence of the opposed directions of the 'going out of itself' (*Außersichgehen*) – that is, the 'further determination' – and the 'going into itself' (*Insichgehen*). The 'widest extension is at the same time the highest intensity.'<sup>72</sup> This is the structure of the system. Thus, the absolute method is the 'absolute dialectic'<sup>73</sup> that through the two syllogisms (the formal and the content-determined one) finally establishes the systematic structure of the logical development as end result. System is speculative knowledge of the logic as science.

At this point, the correction of the error and arbitrariness of external reflection unable to reach a definitive conclusion and unable to find the necessity of a first ground is accomplished. The method can be described as the movement in which 'each step of the advancement of the further determination (*Fortgang[s] im Weiterbestimmen*), by getting further away from the indeterminate beginning, is also getting back nearer (*Rückannäherung*) to it,'<sup>74</sup> and consequently 'that which at first may appear to be different, namely, the retrospective grounding of the beginning and the progressive further determining of it, coincide and are the same.'<sup>75</sup> At this point, the method that 'knows' what the beginning is and how the advancement is made is the 'method of truth.'<sup>76</sup> Such method yields knowledge of the logic as system. This is the only true conclusion – *das Ende* – of the logic. Only the logic as system can, in turn, ground the system of the philosophical sciences.

In the circular structure of the system, the method as 'pure relation to itself' is reconnected back to Being (i.e. to the beginning). Method, however, is now 'filled Being (*erfülltes Sein*)', the concept that conceives itself, Being as the *concrete* and at the same time absolutely *intensive* totality.<sup>77</sup> As Hegel announced at the beginning of the chapter, the absolute idea '*alone* is Being.'<sup>78</sup> However, once the end has been reached the difference between absolute idea and absolute method is clear: in the latter case there is no

rest, there is no possibility left open for the error, arbitrariness, and confusion of external reflection and un-dialectical thinking.

## Notes

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1. As Hegel puts it, method is mode or Art und Weise of both being and knowing. 6 G.W.F. Hegel, 'Wissenschaft der Logik,' in *Werke* 550–51 (Eva Moldenhauer & Hans Marcus Michel eds, 1986) [hereinafter 1 WL]. All translations, in either the text or the footnotes, are the author's translations. Translations are offset by brackets.
2. See Angelica Nuzzo, 'The Idea of "Method" in Hegel's Science of Logic – A Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Knowing,' 39–40 *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 1–18 (1999); Angelica Nuzzo, 'The Truth of "absolute Wissen,"' in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 265–94 (Alfred Denker & Michael Vekereds, 2003), Angelica Nuzzo, *System* (2003).
3. 2 WL, *supra* note 1, at 549.
4. *Id.* at 549.
5. *Id.* ('Alles Übrige ist Irrtum, Trübheit, Meinung, Streben, Willkür und Vergänglichkeit; die absolute Idee *allein* ist Sein, unvergängliches Leben, sich wissende Wahrheit, und ist *alle* Wahrheit.') (emphasis added).
6. 2 WL, *supra* note 1, at 570.
7. See Andre Doz, 'Le sens du mot "absolu" chez Hegel,' 1 *Parcours philosophiques*, 37–47 (2001).
8. 2 *Wissenschaft*, *supra* note 1, at 551–2.
9. *Id.*, at 549.
10. *Id.*, at 550.
11. *Id.* at 549 (emphasis added). For contrast see the curious syntactic construction of the opening of the first moment of the Absolute in the logic of essence: 'Das Absolute ist *nicht nur das Sein, noch auch das Wesen.*' *Id.* at 187 ([The absolute is not only being nor also essence.]); see also *id.* at 189.
12. *Id.* at 549.
13. See *Id.* at 550 ('das Logische der absoluten Idee' [the logical of the absolute idea]).
14. *Id.*
15. *Id.* at 569 ('Erweiterung' [Extension]); see also *id.* at 567 ('erweitert ... zu einem System' [extended ... to a system]).
16. *Id.* at 569.
17. See G.W.F. Hegel, 'Phenomenology of Spirit,' *supra* note 1, *Werke*, vol. 3 at 24.
18. For Hegel's argument in the chapter on the Absolute in the logic of essence meant to dismantle the pretension of the Absolute to be really and truly absolute or 'absolute form.' See 2 *Wissenschaft* *supra*, note 1, at 188 ('die Bestimmung des Absoluten ist, die absolute Form zu sein' [the determination of the absolute is to be absolute form]), 194 ('das Absolute' [absolute Form]). In the last chapter of the logic, Hegel shows that only method can be absolute form. 2 *Wissenschaft*, *supra* note 1, at 548–73.
19. 1 WL at 172–3, 177–8.
20. *Id.* at 172 (emphasis added); see also *id.* at 178.
21. 2 WL, *supra* note 1, at 550.
22. See *id.* at 187 ('Es soll aber dargestellt werden, was das Absolute ist.' [It must be shown what the absolute is.]). And since such 'showing' can be neither a

- 'determining' nor external reflection, it can be only the Absolute's own 'Auslegung,' namely a pointing to what the absolute is.
23. *Id.* at 192. The Absolute is attribute and the attribute is only 'Art und Weise' namely mode; mode, however, is only exteriority of the Absolute. *Id.* at 193 ([most exterior exteriority]).
  24. *Id.* at 551 ('all figures of a given content').
  25. *Id.*
  26. *Id.* at 551.
  27. *Id.*
  28. *Id.*
  29. *Id.*
  30. See *id.* at 551–2.
  31. *Id.* at 568 ([being, essence, universality]).
  32. *Id.* at 553.
  33. *Id.* ([arbitrarily]); see also *id.* at 549.
  34. *Id.* at 553.
  35. *Id.* at 554.
  36. 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 65.
  37. It is certainly true that the two perspectives somehow coincide. However, they do coincide only at the end of the logic.
  38. 2 *WL*, *supra* note, 1, *supra* note 1, at 555.
  39. *Id.*; see also *id.* at 557 ([certainty of the concept]).
  40. *Id.* at 555.
  41. *Id.* at 556.
  42. Hegel refers to Plato, *id.* at 557, and then implicitly to Kant, *id.* at 560.
  43. *Id.* at 557.
  44. *Id.*
  45. *Id.* at 560.
  46. *Id.*, at 558; see also *id.* at 557.
  47. *Id.* at 561.
  48. *Id.* at 549.
  49. *Id.* at 552.
  50. *Id.* at 562.
  51. *Id.* at 566.
  52. *Id.* at 563, 566.
  53. *Id.* at 566 ([It can initially seem that such knowing of the result is an analysis of it, and consequently that those determinations and their process must lay apart from each other.]).
  54. *Id.* at 567.
  55. *Id.* at 551 ([absolute foundation and last truth]), 569 ([The universal constitutes the foundation; the advancement therefore should not only be taken as a running from one to the other.]).
  56. *Id.* at 567 ([This is the point where the content of knowledge as such first enters the circle of the consideration.]).
  57. *Id.* at 567, 569.
  58. *Id.* at 567.
  59. *Id.*
  60. *Id.*
  61. *Id.*
  62. *Id.*

63. G.W.F. Hegel, 'Enzyclopaedia,' *in Werke*, vol. 8, § 242 (Eva Moldenhauer & Hans Marcus Michel eds, 1986).
64. 2 *Wissenschaft*, *supra* note 1, at 569.
65. *Id.* at 571.
66. *Id.* at 568.
67. *Id.* ([But the indeterminateness that those logical beginnings have as their only content is itself that which constitutes their determinateness.]).
68. *Id.*
69. *Id.* at 569.
70. *Id.*
71. *Id.*
72. *Id.* at 570.
73. *Id.*
74. *Id.*
75. *Id.*
76. *Id.* at 571.
77. *Id.* at 572.
78. *Id.* at 549.

# 15

## The Antepenultimacy of the Beginning in Hegel's Logic

David Gray Carlson

Perhaps the single most perplexing problem in Hegel's *Science of Logic* is the status of its 'famous and irritating beginning.'<sup>1</sup>

Hegel famously insisted that philosophy must be self-grounding. It cannot start from 'givens.' For Hegel, presupposition is the enemy of science. '[S]tupid – I can find no other word for it,' he remarked.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, if Hegel's own beginning rests on unjustified presupposition, then his project is defeated at the start. This is a problem Hegel worried about and claimed to have solved.<sup>3</sup>

Hegel is usually read as excusing his presuppositional beginning by making his first step the very last step of the Logic. On this interpretation, the beginning is admittedly a contingency or a choice by the subjective will of the philosopher,<sup>4</sup> but the first step is 'proven' when it becomes the last step in the logic. As Hegel puts it, 'The essential requirement for the science of logic is not so much that the beginning be a pure immediacy, but rather that the whole of the science be within itself a circle in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first.'<sup>5</sup>

I would like to propose a refinement, however. I wish to defend the proposition that the last, 'ultimate' step of the *Science of Logic* is *not* the first step. Rather, the first step of the logic is the *antepenultimate* step – the *third* from the last – in the *Science of Logic* as a whole.

This interpretation allows for an answer to a question that has bothered readers of Hegel's first chapter on pure being. There Hegel emphasizes the *identity* of being and nothing. If these are identical, how can their *difference* be discerned? The question boils down to this: where does difference come from?<sup>6</sup> If one thing is clear, the *result* of the identity of being and nothing is becoming – a concept that depends on a *difference* between being and nothing. Becoming, Hegel emphasizes, is 'a movement in which both [being and nothing] are distinguished.'<sup>7</sup> Yet in the obliterative regime of Pure Being, how can difference be accounted for?

If we see Hegel as beginning with the antepenultimate step in his logical system, we can provide a ready answer to the origin of difference, on which becoming depends. On my interpretation, difference *is* presupposed, as

Hegel's critics have alleged. What is different (in becoming) is absolute knowing – the ultimate step – and pure immediacy – the antepenultimate step. Becoming summarizes the difference between these two – *not* the difference between being and nothing as such. To state this point in slightly different terms, pure being was *supposed* to be absolute knowing – the Understanding's propositional summary of it. But it ended up being nothing at all – a failure.<sup>8</sup> If there *is* a difference between being and nothing, it can only be discerned from a perspective that *remembers* absolute knowing and compares pure nothing as the result of the attempt to summarize absolute knowing in an immediate way.

To see how Hegel's *Anfang* is antepenultimate, we begin – in the style of Harold Pinter or the noir film *Memento* – at the end. To turn the tables on Leonard Nimoy, only by recalling the future may we comprehend the past.

## Hegel's last chapter

Hegel's last chapter in the *Science of Logic* is entitled 'absolute Idea.' Generally speaking, 'idea' is the negative unity of subject and object. Throughout the last third of the *Science of Logic* – the Subjective Logic – the notion or concept (*Begriff*) theorizes itself. It produces an objective account of its subjective self by transporting itself from subject into predicate. This occurs in the chapter entitled syllogism (*Schluß*), though perhaps better translated as 'inference.'<sup>9</sup> In effect, the subject *infers* its own objectivity. Yet it finds itself alienated from its self-inference and enters into a subject-object relation.

Idea is the dynamic quality that both subject and predicate share: each on its own logic has no right against the other. Each sacrifices itself on behalf of the other, pointing to the other as the source of its being. Idea is the common element of self-sacrifice – the inability of any positivized concept to maintain itself against its 'other.'

*Absolute* idea arises when both the true (or thinking) and the good (or doing) give up their pretensions. What ends up being true is that Kantian philosophy is a failure. The truth is that there *is* no thing-in-itself; it's just an illusion that passes away like any other appearance.<sup>10</sup> The good (or practical idea), in contrast, is the obliteration of anything that stands in the way of the subject's freedom. The good is action, and '[a]ll action presupposes a reality "alien" to the doer ...'.<sup>11</sup> Action 'treats the world as an empty receptacle for the actualization of its subjective purposes ...'.<sup>12</sup> The true good, then, is the realization that the only obstacle to the subject's freedom and self-knowledge is the very falsehood that the subject manufactured in theorizing about itself. The good and the true each sacrifice themselves: this commonality shared by the true and the good is absolute idea.

Absolute idea is also called 'method.' From the foregoing account of self-sacrifice and self-erasure, it should be clear that method is very, very



negative. The method is that all affirmative propositions must obliterate themselves as inadequate to their own object. The *Science of Logic*, then, is thoroughly Spinozist in nature. For Spinoza, '[d]eterminateness is negation. [T]his true and simple insight establishes the absolute unity of substance.'<sup>13</sup> So it is for Hegel, with the key difference that Hegel's substance is so negative that it positivizes itself, only to dissolve its positive implication.

Like all concepts in the *Science of Logic*, absolute idea is put through the gauntlet of three logical steps. The first is the step of the Understanding. The Understanding makes immediate propositions. 'The understanding considers all encountered beings ... to be at peace, fixed, limited univocally defined individual, and positive.'<sup>14</sup> To produce this stable, reliable account of reality and in order to make sense of the materials before it, the Understanding must always leave something out – reality is ultimately dynamic, but the Understanding is static.

Dialectical Reason is the critique of the Understanding. It emphasizes the omitted materials that the Understanding left out, in order to show that the Understanding's proposition is the opposite of what it ought to be. Dialectical Reason is in the business of *remembering* the logical sequence that the Understanding suppresses.<sup>15</sup> Memory is the stuff that dialectical dreams are made of.<sup>16</sup> Dialectical Reason is tantamount to *experience*,<sup>17</sup> in that 'theory' is shown to be inconsistent with the 'real' world known to exist beyond the latest theory.

Yet Dialectical Reason does not just negate a positive theory. With Hegel, nothing is always something; dialectical negativity is just as positive as that which it critiques. If, according to Dialectical Reason, the Understanding has suppressed materials in order to make a positive proposition, Dialectical Reason must positivize the suppressed materials. It therefore replicates the fault laid upon the doorstep of the Understanding.<sup>18</sup>

The third step – Speculative Reason – brings together the prior, diverse steps of Understanding and Dialectical Reason, pointing out that they share a commonality or identity as well as a difference. Indeed, their commonality *is* their difference. In other words, each side positivizes material and so leaves aside or expels the negative, from which it purports to be *different*. It is this excluded negative (difference) that Speculative Reason exploits. Speculative Reason is constantly bringing this commonality to the fore.

The three-step process is then repeated. What Speculative Reason produces is 'interpreted' by the Understanding. This interpretation is one-sided. Once again, something is always left out, which generates further steps in the Logic. The move from Speculative Reason to the proposition of the Understanding is always retrogressive. In Leninist terms, it is always two steps forward after one step back. '[A]dvance is a *retreat into ground*,' as Hegel puts it.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, as the Understanding interprets the material at hand, the propositions of the Understanding become more sophisticated

as the Logic progresses. By the time the Understanding reaches the *mesne* realm of Essence, all its propositions are negative and dialectical in nature. In effect, the Understanding transforms itself into Dialectical Reason. By the time the Understanding reaches the realm of Notion, it sees things speculatively. Understanding thus transforms itself Speculative Reason.<sup>20</sup> The *Science of Logic* ends when the Understanding, Dialectical Reason and Speculative Reason converge in absolute idea. Taken together, they are *method*.

Because all that exists is the implosion of appearance, the major theme of the *Science of Logic* is that there is no mysterious 'beyond' to the realm of appearances.<sup>21</sup> It's appearances all the way down,<sup>22</sup> and appearance must erase itself in favor of a beyond that turns out not even to be there. As Hegel remarks in the *Phenomenology*:

behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to conceal the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless *we* go behind it ourselves, as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen ...<sup>23</sup>

Self-sacrifice disappearance of the subject – is the very 'idea' of the *Science of Logic*. For Hegel, self-sacrifice takes on a special meaning at the advanced level of idea. To see why, it is necessary to drop back and consider the very core of Hegel's system – the 'true infinite,' which makes its official appearance in the second chapter of the *Science of Logic*. The true infinite plays off the logical implication of finitude. A finite thing, by its own logic, *must* come to an end. Otherwise, it would not be finite. When it does end, the thing has become what it *ought* to be – nothing. Yet, for Hegel, nothing is, after all, something. If the finite thing passes away, the memory of it remains. The finite thing obtains an *ideal* existence when it ceases to be. Yet in its ideal form, being is subject to *recollection*. The German for recollection is *Erinnerung*, which can also be translated as 'inwardization.' True infinity is therefore the process of inwardization. Its place in the *Science of Logic* is the very portal from *reality* to *ideality*. In effect, ideality constitutes the memory of what *was*.

The true infinite becomes what it ought to be – *but it also remains what it was*. It is a *unity* of its finite self *and* its beyond. The true infinite therefore constantly removes itself from self-presence to a beyond – *and* it brings its beyond into its own presence. This double movement of cancellation and preservation is famously called 'sublation'<sup>24</sup> – what Slavoj Žižek calls the 'chiasmic exchange of properties.'<sup>25</sup> The idea in sublation is that the finite thing invests itself into the beyond when it ceases to be, and the beyond invests itself into present thought when *it* ceases to be. In effect, both the finite thing and its shadowy beyond renounce their being and assign it to their other.

With the advent of absolute idea, the very idea of a 'beyond' becomes untenable. In absolute idea, there is no longer a place to which the true infinite can withdraw. At this point, Hegel says, the distinction between form and content falls apart. Absolute idea is absolute form, 'each of whose moments is within itself the *totality* and hence, as indifference to the form, is the complete *content* of the whole.'<sup>26</sup> At the point where it is 'understood' that there is no beyond, self-sacrificing idea can only return to itself, since there is, at this point, no other. Vanishing form *is* content at this stage. The point *is* sacrifice of self for self.

Yet, as I have said, absolute idea must play out the three moments of the Understanding, Dialectical Reason and Speculative Reason. Indeed, these moments *literally are* the Understanding, Dialectical Reason and Speculative Reason. The moments identified in the last chapter *are* method itself – each one moment implying all the others as well as itself.<sup>27</sup>

The first step in the analysis of absolute idea is the antepenultimate step of the *Science of Logic* and, I contend, the true beginning for the *Science of Logic*. This is the step of immediacy. It represents the Understanding as such.

The second step is mediation – all the mediations there are. This is the dialectical step in which identity is paired with difference (though, covertly, Dialectical Reason actually compares two *identities*). The significance of mediation is that absolute idea is revealed to be an active, dialectic thinker that thinks itself. As such, it is *personality*, something that Hegel has declared to be missing in Spinoza's account of substance – 'a defect which has been the main cause of hostility to Spinoza's system.'<sup>28</sup>

For Spinoza, cognition is external to substance. What is finite is not derived from substance but remains alien to it. Finite concepts can be dissolved and traced back to substance, but Spinoza cannot travel in the opposite direction by deriving such concepts from substance. Accordingly, Hegel finds that Spinoza's notions of substance, 'profound and correct as they are,' are mere definitions, 'which are *immediately* assumed at the outset of the science.'<sup>29</sup> The absolute cannot be a *first*. It must be the *result*.

For Hegel the concept thinks itself dynamically, and this means it is person-like:

The highest, most concentrated point is the *pure personality* which, solely through the absolute dialectic which is its nature, no less *embraces and holds everything within itself*, because it makes itself the supremely free – the simplicity which is the first immediacy and Universality.<sup>30</sup>

Personality implies *life*, but also the *cognition* of being alive. Life is immediate idea – 'impenetrable atomic subjectivity.'<sup>31</sup> Life ends up standing for self-sacrifice. There can only be life in general if individual lives terminate in death. Cognition – the second, dialectical portion of idea<sup>32</sup> – is *mediated* idea. It cognizes itself as Life and so too it sacrifices itself. This implies that

absolute knowing – the ultimate step – is, as negation of the negation, the sacrifice of self-sacrifice. On its own logic, Absolute knowing shows what it is when it *stops* sacrificing itself and produces some positivized account of itself, an account in which *Geist* aspires *not* to sacrifice itself.

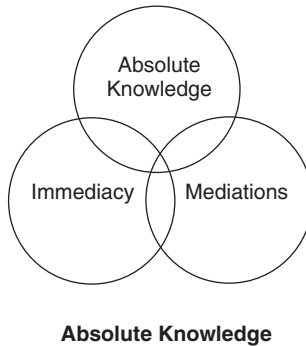
For this reason, in the very last step of the Logic, Absolute idea returns to immediacy as its final act of self-manifestation. Absolute knowing is therefore the unity of doing (or thinking) and being. It is divine creation – what Kant called ‘intellectual intuition.’<sup>33</sup> What it *thinks* truly is.

Absolute knowing is the ultimate step in the *Science of Logic*. Significantly it is also the very last step in the *Phenomenology*. This congruence is significant because, in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel expressly describes the *Phenomenology* as presupposed by the *Science of Logic*.<sup>34</sup> Absolute knowing stands for the realization that human consciousness is *not* any basis for scientific philosophizing.<sup>35</sup> In effect, absolute knowledge ‘ceases itself to be knowledge.’<sup>36</sup> It is also *all the knowledge there is* – that there is no knowledge. There is only the appearance of knowledge.

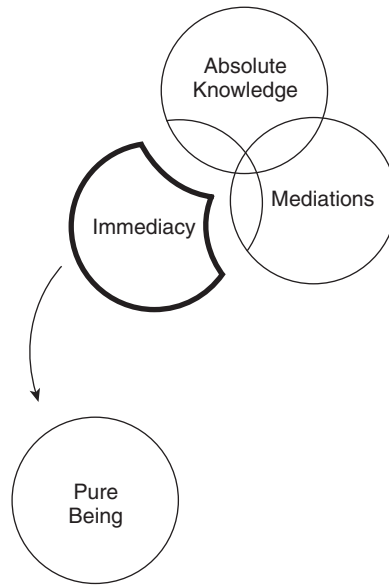
### Hegel’s first chapter

The beginning of the *Science of Logic*, I contend, is the antepenultimate step from Hegel’s last chapter. The beginning is simply the *immediate* version of absolute knowing. It is what the ultimate step of absolute knowing, on its own logic, must produce. For this reason, the first step is not, as usually supposed, the ultimate ‘speculative’ step or the penultimate ‘dialectic’ step but the antepenultimate step – the Understanding as such.

The following diagram shows the structure of the beginning in the *Science of Logic*. In this diagram, the left side of the page is to be identified with positivity. The right side of the page leans to negativity. The middle of the page is positivity and negativity thought together. So conceived, absolute knowledge can be portrayed as follows:



Hegel's beginning, in contrast, is an immediate proposition about absolute knowing:



#### Hegel's Beginning

In this drawing, pure being is shown to be a one-sided view of all the knowledge there is. In effect, the concept, if it is to know itself, must make a proposition about itself. It must say affirmatively what it *is*.<sup>37</sup> And, given that absolute knowing is the end of the logic, it must *recall*, or *remember* what it is; being complete and total, whatever it once was is now in its (timeless, logical) past.

But this first thought of itself is a failure. It fails even to *be* a thought, for

there is nothing, nothing in heaven or in nature or mind or anywhere else which does not equally contain both immediacy and mediation, so that these two determinations reveal themselves to be unseparated and inseparable and the opposition between them to be a nullity.<sup>38</sup>

In this recollection, the motor of the logic – contradiction<sup>39</sup> – cannot get started. Absolute idea perpetually turns the ignition key of Understanding and gets no result. In an important, paradoxical way, Hegel's beginning *is* a failure, as many scholars have suspected. But Hegel makes his failure his success. The failure to have a thought *at all* is the beginning of the *Science of Logic*.<sup>40</sup> And curiously, *non-thought* is highly descriptive of absolute knowing, which is *no knowledge at all*.<sup>41</sup>

The Understanding paradoxically succeeds by failing. And in its failure it anticipates the final result very presciently – all immediate propositions must fail.

Famously, in Hegel's opening chapter in the *Science of Logic*, pure being is shown to be pure nothing.<sup>42</sup> But this is simply the *identity* of being and nothing. In the original German, the first sentence of the subsection on Becoming reads: '*Das reine Sein und das reine Nichts ist also dasselbe.*'<sup>43</sup> This sentence could be translated as: 'Pure being and pure nothing is the same.' As John Burbidge remarks: 'The singular verb reinforces the content of the sentence to suggest that there is not movement at all, but simply a single identity.'<sup>44</sup> Strictly speaking, '[t]he indeterminate moments of becoming are not true moments: they cannot be concretely specified, since such moments "are always changing into each other, and reciprocally cancelling each other."<sup>45</sup>

Hegel adds, however, 'they are absolutely distinct, and yet ... they are unseparated and inseparable and ... each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*.'<sup>46</sup> Any difference between being and nothing is 'a merely fancied or imagined difference.'<sup>47</sup> In other words, we mortals *believe* that being and nothing is different. But belief has no purchase in logic. As Hegel puts it, mere belief 'is not in the sequence of this exposition.'<sup>48</sup>

It cannot suffice merely to *believe* that being and nothing is different. We must prove it. Where then does difference come from? It specifically is *not present* in pure being, which is only *identical* to pure nothing.

I contend that difference precedes pure being in origin. That is to say, it is presupposed. Furthermore, its identification depends upon a viewpoint that is able to comprehend absolute knowing standing over against its initial, failed self-interpretation. According to this viewpoint, Speculative Reason compares absolute knowing to the failed attempt of the Understanding to account for it. It perceives a vanishing of all thought into no thought at all. All thought is different from no thought. In short, becoming constitutes the recollection of what *once* was, compared to what is (not) now – a ceasing-to-be. But since, for Hegel, nothing is always something, it is just as much a coming-to-be – a be-coming. Again to quote Burbidge, 'The difference that "reality" introduces is not the result of a simple transition, but has been *posited* by *reflection* when it added to the immediate content ... its remembered parentage. The move came from outside the immediate concept.'<sup>49</sup>

This implies that there *is* no proper beginning for Hegel. He is, as Jean-Luc Nancy observes, 'the first philosopher for whom there is, explicitly, neither beginning nor end.'<sup>50</sup> An articulation of this principle appears in the following passage:

Simple immediacy is itself an expression of reflection and contains a reference to its distinction from what is mediated. This simple immediacy, therefore, in its true expression is *pure being*... . Here the beginning is

made with being which is represented as having come to be through mediation, a mediation which is also a sublating of itself; and there is presupposed pure knowing as the outcome of finite knowing, of consciousness. But if no presupposition is to be made, and the beginning itself is taken *immediately*, then its only determination is that it is to be the beginning of logic, of thought, as such. All that is present is simply the resolve, which can also be regarded as arbitrary, that we propose to consider thought as such.<sup>51</sup>

In this passage, Hegel admits that the indeterminacy of pure being contains a reference to determinacy. Pure being cannot properly disentangle itself from its history. Pure being is *different from* its history. Yet, as pure being, it is immediacy and *only* immediacy. As such it must suppress its history. But without its history, it reduces to *mere resolve* to begin. And as such it looks arbitrary. *Why* should we begin? At the beginning this is no means clear.<sup>52</sup> But by the end, we know that idea requires its own manifestation. It *must* begin.

What pure being is different *from* is not pure nothing but *pure knowing* – Logic's ultimate step. By way of evidence, in the subsection entitled 'Nothing,' Hegel says:

To intuit or think nothing has, therefore, a meaning; both are distinguished and thus nothing *is* (exists) in our intuiting or thinking; or rather it is empty intuition and thought itself, and the same empty intuition or thought as pure being. Nothing is, therefore, the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as, pure *being*.<sup>53</sup>

This passage expressly refers to difference, and what is different is thinking and thought. Thinking stands for absolute knowing, which, we know from Hegel's last chapter, has the active principle – personality. The thought, or, more precisely, the *failed* thought of being/nothing, is passive/identical. The *thought* contains within itself no difference. Difference is, however, already on the scene in 'becoming.' What is different is (a) the *entire Science of Logic* as embodied in absolute knowing and (b) the failed, indeterminate thought of being/nothing.

Admittedly, Hegel emphasizes a 'movement' between pure being and pure nothing. In a passage that few have failed to miss as highly important, Hegel writes:

What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being does not pass over but has passed over – into nothing. But it is equally true that they are not undistinguished from each other ... they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*. Their truth is, therefore, this move-

ment of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: *becoming*, a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself.<sup>54</sup>

The past tense of pure being and pure nothing is important. Pure being and nothing is never before us as a thought – because it is *unthinkable*. It is a *failed* thought. It is retroactively theorized only. And in support of this interpretation, it may be noted that Hegel states that pure being and pure nothing ‘have no separate subsistence of their own but *are* only in becoming.’<sup>55</sup> For this reason, becoming is not, strictly speaking, a *transition*. With transition, Hegel writes, ‘one tends to think of the two terms, from one of which transition is made to the other, as at rest, apart from each other, the transition taking place *between* them.’<sup>56</sup> Since pure being and nothing is less than thought, the two terms cannot be brought together in the relation Hegel calls ‘transition.’<sup>57</sup>

Hegel refers to movement between being and nothing. But strictly speaking this movement has to be understood, not as the movement between being and nothing, but as the movement from absolute knowing (or active thinking) to being/nothing, its first failed proposition about itself.<sup>58</sup> This is no move forward but a move *back* from the ultimate step of absolute knowing to the antepenultimate step of immediacy. In describing what it is, absolute knowing must *recall* its beginning. Recollection of the antepenultimate step then becomes the first step of the *Science of Logic*.

Further evidence of Hegel’s intent can be brought to bear. At the opening of his essay, ‘*With what must Science Begin?*’, where Hegel states that the beginning can be either mediated or unmediated – but either way of beginning is refuted in advance.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the beginning *must* fail. If it did not, then there would be no possibility of progress *beyond* the beginning. ‘Hence the advance is not a kind of *superfluity*; this it would be if that with which the beginning is made were in truth already the absolute.’<sup>60</sup> In short, it is the very nature of a beginning that it must fail; otherwise it would be *result* – not beginning.<sup>61</sup>

Compared to its origin in absolute knowing, the beginning of pure being ‘is concentrated into this unity [that] has sublated all reference to an other and to mediation.’<sup>62</sup> This is what the beginning must be – abstract and unmediated, because mediation points to some *other*, prior step that is actually the true beginning. And yet this reference to other is precisely what pure being implies. To repeat what Hegel has said, ‘Simple immediacy is itself an expression of reflection and contains a reference to its distinction from what is mediated.’<sup>63</sup> In other words, in spite of itself, pure being refers to something other than itself, and so as a beginning it is a failure. This requires an over-arching perspective that can discern the difference between absolute knowing, on the one hand, and being and nothing, on the other.



## Becoming as the true beginning

Pure being is merely identical to (not different from) pure nothing. Accordingly, pure being and pure nothing are not even moments. Rather, they are retrospective reflections on *what must have been*. As Marcuse puts it, 'Hegel says explicitly that not being but having been (*Gewordensein*) is to be grasped as a becoming.'<sup>64</sup> Here Marcuse refers to the 'has passed over' remark<sup>65</sup> from the passage quoted above.

Some have therefore suggested that becoming is the first *true* thought in the logic. Gadamer is of this view,<sup>66</sup> and he quotes the *Lectures in the History of Philosophy* to back it up: 'One has acquired great insight when one realizes that being and not-being are abstractions without truth and that the first truth is Becoming alone.'<sup>67</sup>

Why does Gadamer claim that Becoming is the true beginning? According to Gadamer, pure being and pure nothing are simply presuppositions for Becoming. They are not 'things' in themselves. We first *think* of Becoming – we cannot think the unthinkable pure being or pure nothing. Then we reason that, if change or transition exists, it must have changed *from* something. Only in 'becoming' is difference manifested. Yet, Gadamer says, the converse is not convincing. Why should we think of Becoming when we light upon pure being or pure nothing?

Yet, in so observing, Gadamer forgets that being and nothing are *unthinkable*. As we cannot think them, there is little use in observing that they do not imply becoming. What becoming/ceasing-to-be represents is not the difference between being and nothing but rather the difference between thinker and (failed) thought. Gadamer is right that there can be no derivation of becoming from being and nothing. Being and nothing represents a recollection by absolute knowing of what it once must have been. What becoming represents is *all* the *Science of Logic* ceasing to be in the Understanding.

Although the logical method depends on the sequence of Understanding, Dialectical Reason, and Speculative Reason, Gadamer rightly observes that the 'transition' from being/nothing to Becoming is a special case. There is nothing dialectical about pure nothing. On its own, pure being and nothing is so little different that it can generate no synthesis. Any difference assigned to it is merely a matter of subjective belief, not Logic. For this reason, Gadamer emphasizes that pure nothing 'bursts forth immediately' from pure being. 'Clearly, the expression, "bursts forth," is one carefully chosen to exclude any idea of mediation and transition.'<sup>68</sup>

Yet Gadamer seems to be criticizing Hegel's claim that pure being is the beginning. The modulation between pure being and pure nothing, which Hegel emphasizes, is, for Gadamer, 'an untenable way of putting the matter.'<sup>69</sup> I agree that it is untenable, but I do not read Hegel as making this

point. For Hegel, the modulation between being and nothing is not what precedes becoming. What precedes 'becoming' is *thinking* which *fails* to form a thought of its own being. Instead of contemplating its own being, absolute knowing finds before it *nothing at all*. In thought it has *ceased to be*. The beginning, Hegel says, 'is to be made in the element of thought that is free and for itself, in *pure knowing*.'<sup>70</sup> 'Now starting from this determination of pure knowledge, all that is needed to ensure that the beginning remains immanent in its scientific development is to consider ... simply to take up, *what is there before us*.'<sup>71</sup> These sentences show that 'becoming' is not the beginning – even if it is the first determinate thought in the *Science of Logic*. Rather, the collapse of absolute knowing is the beginning.

Nevertheless, Gadamer justly attacks the very question, How does becoming emerge from pure being? It does not emerge at all. Becoming is absolute knowing itself, as it stands back from its own failed proposition, 'learning' from its failure that when it tries to think an *immediate thought*, it ceases to be in that thought and is alienated from its product.<sup>72</sup>

For this reason, the 'transition' from pure nothing and pure being to becoming should be viewed as a non-transition, since transition implies a difference between origin and result. Hegel was aware of this when he referred to the fact that 'being does not pass over but has passed over – into nothing.'<sup>73</sup> Pure being and pure nothing are simply what becoming implies.

Becoming, for Gadamer, is the first *successful* thought and is therefore the true beginning, because the thought of pure being is a failure.<sup>74</sup> But this interpretation wrongly presupposes that the beginning *must be a success*. I think Hegel intends for the beginning to be a failure, containing a reference to some prior origin in spite of itself.

## Conclusion

Hegel aims for a presupposition-free philosophy. Logic is a circle, as every Hegelian knows. Yet movement in Logic is a 'lumpy, bumpy triangular wheel.'<sup>75</sup> Logic progresses by dropping back and hazarding one-sided propositions doomed to fail in advance. This is just as true of Hegel's beginning. Pure being, which is pure nothing, is just such a retrogression. In the methodical progress that Hegel describes, the beginning is a retrogression to the antepenultimate step – the appearance of the Understanding, the faculty of immediacy. Hegel's beginning is a failure, and that is why it succeeds.

## Notes

1. Kenley Royce Dove, 'Hegel's "Deduction of the Concept of Science",' in *Hegel in the Sciences* 271, 272 (Robert S. Cohen & Marx W. Wartofsky 1984).

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic* 41–42 (A.V. Miller trans. 1969) [hereinafter cited as *SL*]; 1 G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* 21 (1975) [hereinafter cited as *WL*].
3. On this theme, see Michael N. Forster, *Hegel and Skepticism* (1989); William Maker, 'Beginning,' in *Essays on Hegel's Logic* 36 (George di Giovanni ed., 1990).
4. Hegel remarks, 'All that is present is simply the resolve ... to consider thought as such.' *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 70; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54; see also Georg W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic* § 17 (William Wallace trans., 1975) ('To speak of a beginning of philosophy has a meaning only in relation to a person who proposes to commence the study, and not in relation to the science as science') [hereinafter cited as *Lesser Logic*]; Clark Butler, Hegel's Logic: *Between Dialectic and History* 1 (1996) ('the project of defining the absolute ... is certainly presupposed').
5. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 71; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 56. Compare this remark from the *Philosophy of Right*:

Philosophy forms a circle. It has an initial or immediate point – for it must begin somewhere – a point which is not demonstrated and is not a result. But the starting point of philosophy is immediately relative, for it must appear at another end-point as a result. Philosophy is a sequence which is not suspended in mid-air; it does not begin immediately, but is rounded off within itself.

G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* § 2 (Allen W. Wood trans. 1993).

6. John Burbidge, among others, poses this question. John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion: The Reasonableness of Christianity* 14 (1992) ('But from what does this second moment of difference and disappearance arise?').

Charles Taylor, whose book did much to reverse the eclipse of Hegel's work in the twentieth century, finds this point a fatal flaw in the Logic. He writes:

The derivation of Becoming here is not as solid as that of *Dasein*. This is the first but not the last place in the *Logic* where Hegel will go beyond what is directly established by his argument, because he sees in the relation of concepts a suggestion of his ontology... . But of course as probative arguments these passages are unconvincing. They fail, as strict conceptual proof, however persuasive they are as *interpretations* for those who hold Hegel's view of things on other grounds. Thus, in this case, the notion of becoming imposes itself supposedly because of the passage from Being to Nothing and back; but this is a passage which our thought is forced to when we contemplate either ... [W]e cannot trade on this principle at this stage.

Charles Taylor, *Hegel* 233 (1975). Taylor's complaint is that the movement between Being and Nothing can only be 'for us' and must exceed the bounds of the sparse logical development available at the end of the first chapter.

7. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 83; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.
8. It is possible to see Pure Being as the *form* of Absolute Knowing and Pure Nothing as the *content* of it. The job of form is to disappear in favor of a deeper truth. And nothingness is the deeper truth. Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* 53 (1991).
9. 'It is evident that the term syllogism; is the worst possible translation for the German word *Schluss*, which does not signify the well-known scholastic technique for reaching a conclusion, but rather the "issue," the "unification," the "reconciliation" of the artificial distinctions of the understanding.' E.L. Fleischmann, *La science universelle ou la logique de Hegel* 266 (1968).

10. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 785; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 440–1.
11. Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* 298 (Seyla Benhabib trans. 1987).
12. *Id.* at 169.
13. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 536; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 164. See Letter 50, in 2 *Chief Works of Spinoza* 370 (R.H.M. Elwes ed. 1955).
14. *Marcuse*, *supra* note 10, at 10.
15. The past is no chronological past, as logical process is not a historical process. For example, Hegel refers to essence as 'timelessly past – being.' *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 389; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 3. See also *Lesser Logic*, *supra* note 4, § 112 ('Essence we may certainly regard as past being, remembering however meanwhile that the past is not utterly denied, but only laid aside and thus at the same time preserved').
16. John McCumber, *The Company of Words: Hegel, Language and Systematic Philosophy* 123 (1993) ('for Hegel, thinking – and especially philosophical thinking – is basically a highly sophisticated way of remembering – or, as Hegel puts it, intelligence is cognitive only insofar as it is recognitive').
17. Kenneth R. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism: A Study of the Aim and Method of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* 130 (1989).
18. This double nature of Dialectical Reason means that Hegel's triadic system is arguably tetrachotomous. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 836; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 498. In the quadratic case, Dialectical Reason is counted twice from the perspective of Speculative Reason, which sees Dialectical Reason as self-alienated. Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* 79–80 (1999).
19. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 71; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 56.
20. For this reason, 'self-contradiction comes in degrees.' Forster, *supra* note 3, at 140.
21. Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence* 90 (Leonard Lawlor & Amit Sen trans., 1997) ('The only secret, however, is that there is no secret'); Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* 206 (1989) ('the major point of this section is to argue that there is literally *nothing* "beyond" or "behind" or responsible for the human experience of the world of appearances, and certainly not an Absolute Spirit'); Stanley Rosen, *G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* 44 (1974) ('There is for Hegel nothing "behind" that process, no hidden source or God, from which Being emerges').
22. Ermanno Bencivenga, *Hegel's Dialectical Logic* 41 (2002) ('Reality is structure (form) all the way down').
23. *Phenomenology*, *supra* note 16, ¶ 165.
24. 'Sublation' is a translation of *Aufhebung*. The English term is actually from chemistry. According to the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, sublation is '[a] precipitate suspended in a liquid, especially urine.' Thanks to the English translators of Hegel, it also refers to the destruction and preservation of logical moments by the more progressive moment which it generates. This translative choice has been laid at the doorstep of Geoffrey Mure, an Oxford commentator from the middle of the century. Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel* 30 (1983); see G.R.G. Mure, *The Philosophy of Hegel* 35 (1965) ("Sublated" will serve as a translation').
25. Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* 39–41 (1991). A chiasmus is the inversion of the order of syntactical elements in the second of two juxtaposed and syntactically parallel phrases or clauses. An example: 'All professors are clever men, but clever men aren't all professors.' Walter Nash, *Rhetoric: The Wit of Persuasion* 114 (1989).
26. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 531; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 158.

27. As John Burbidge puts it, 'method identifies its own internal conditions, making no reference to anything external.' John W. Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* 217 (1981).
28. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 537; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 164.
29. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 537; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 164.
30. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 841; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 502.
31. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 824; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 484.
32. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 775–824; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 429–83.
33. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 163–4 (J.M.D. Meiklejohn trans. 1990). Charles Taylor says that

Hegel reproaches Kant for not having cleaved to the notion of an intellectual intuition, which he himself invented. This would be an understanding, which unlike ours did not have to depend on external reception, on being affected from outside, for its contents, but created them with its thought. This archetypal intellect Kant attributed to God; it was quite beyond us. But God's intellect is ultimately revealed to us for Hegel, it only lives in our thought. Hence we can participate in an intellectual intuition. God's thought is ours.

Taylor, *supra* note 6, at 301

34. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 49; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 30.
35. Professor Winfield complains that Marx, Kierkegaard *et al.* miss the punchline of the *Phenomenology*.

Instead of properly regarding absolute knowing as the collapse of the posited structure of consciousness, they have commonly interpreted it as a determinate cognition that somehow unites subject and object such that its knowing both comprehends and constitutes things as they are in themselves... . Accordingly, Hegel becomes labeled an objective idealist, a philosopher of subject–object identity, a thinker of self-revealing totality, and a consummator of metaphysics for whom thought and being are one.

Richard Dien Winfield, *Overcoming Foundations: Studies in Systematic Philosophy* 26 (1989).

36. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 69; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.
37. Andrew Haas correctly suggests that, *not* pure being, but the decision of the Understanding to abstract pure being from absolute knowing constitutes the true first step of the Logic. Andrew Haas, *Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity* 91 (2000). Similarly, Walter Kaufmann notes that the Logic does not really start from pure being. Rather, the Logic starts with the privileging of the immediate over what is mediated. Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* 190 (1978).
38. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 68; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 52. For Adorno, this is the equivalent of saying there is 'nothing ... that does not contain, merely by being defined as something that exists, the reflection of its mere existence, a spiritual moment.' Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies* 57 (1999).
39. Taylor, *supra* note 6, at 243.
40. This justifies Clark Butler's insight: 'Hegel's great originality was to have claimed, contrary to Aristotle, that an inquiry starting from a false assumption could be a science, and indeed was alone qualified to be science.' Clark Butler, 'The Dialectical Method Today: An Essay in Analytical Hegelianism,' 49 (2003) (unpublished manuscript). See also Angelica Nuzzo, 'The End of Hegel's Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method,' 2 Cardozo J.L., *Policy and Ethics* — (2004)

(‘For Hegel progress is made by staying where one is not by looking away aiming at something else’); Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* 83 (2003) (‘one has to begin by making the “wrong” choice ... the true speculative meaning emerges only through repeated reading, as the after-effect (or byproduct) of the first, “wrong” choice’).

41. Professor Winfield complains that Marx, Kierkegaard *et al.* miss the punchline of the *Phenomenology*.

Instead of properly regarding absolute knowing as the collapse of the posited structure of consciousness, they have commonly interpreted it as a determinate cognition that somehow unites subject and object such that its knowing both comprehends and constitutes things as they are in themselves... . Accordingly, Hegel becomes labeled an objective idealist, a philosopher of subject-object identity, a thinker of self-revealing totality, and a consummator of metaphysics for whom thought and being are one.

Winfield, *supra* note 34, at 26.

42. Marcuse is partly right in asserting, ‘In the foregoing analysis of the concept of being, being did not “turn into” nothing, but both were revealed as identical ...’. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* 130 (1999). But Marcuse errs in deducing from this fact alone that ‘every determinate being contains the being as well as the nothing.’ *Id.* In order for this result to follow, *difference* is required. But difference cannot be found in the non-dialectic relation of pure being and pure nothing. Furthermore, Marcuse errs in denying that transition is proper to the realm of being. *Id.* at 131 (‘Moreover, it is not quite correct to say that one category “passes into” another. The dialectical analysis rather reveals one category *as* another, so that the other represents its unfolded content ...’). Such a view *denies* difference. Transition is the very hallmark of the realm of being. Hegel in fact *defines* becoming as ‘transition to an *other*.’ *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 601; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 240.
43. 1 *WL*, *supra* note 1, at 67.
44. Burbidge, *Religion*, *supra* note 6, at 14. Andrew Haas reads Hegel as making a deliberate grammatical mistake to emphasize the inability of ordinary grammar to account for speculative philosophy, which accounts for *simultaneous* immediacy and mediation. Andrew Haas, *Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity* 97 (2000).
45. Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* 189 (1989).
46. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 83; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.
47. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 92; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 77.
48. ‘[D]as nicht in diese Reihe der Darstellung gehört.’ 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 78. The Miller translation puts it more drily: ‘Opinion, however, is a form of subjectivity which is not proper to an exposition of this kind.’ *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 92.
49. Burbidge, *Religion*, *supra* note 6, at 22.
50. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative* 9 (Jason Smith & Steven Miller eds., 1997) (footnote omitted); see also Adorno, *supra* note 37, at 12 (‘Correctly understood, the choice of a starting point, of what comes first, is a matter of indifference in Hegel’s philosophy; his philosophy does not recognize a first something of this kind as a fixed principle ...’).
51. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 69–70; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.
52. In Professor Winfield’s account, the matter must end here. Rather than viewing the true commencement of the *Logic* as the one-sided proposition of the Understanding, Winfield thinks that determinacy arises for *no reason*:

One could thus say that the proper answer to the question 'Why is there determinacy? is that there is and can be no reason, for any attempt to assign one presupposes determinacy by treating indeterminacy as if it were a definite determiner. All that can be offered in answer is an account of *how* indeterminacy gives rise to something else. What is clear from the start is that what follows from indeterminacy must do so immediately, which is to say, without reason, and without being determined by anything.

Winfield, *supra* note 34, at 50. But if this is so, there can be no account for how Speculative Reason, in arriving at 'becoming,' finds the tools to differentiate stasis from movement.

53. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 82; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.
54. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 83; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.
55. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 93; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 79.
56. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 93; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 79.
57. See Rosen, *supra* note 20, at 111 ('There is, then, never a transition "taking place" from Being to Nothing and thence to Becoming; instead, such a transition has *already* taken place ...').
58. This meaning underwrites Hegel's remark that being and nothing 'sink from their initially imagined *self-subsistence* to the status of *moments*, which are still *distinct* but at the same time are sublated.' *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 105; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 92. Absolute knowing is self-subsistent, and pure being is the Understanding's proposition about absolute knowing. Only an overarching perspective that recalls absolute knowing and its difference from being/nothing can see in being/nothing a ceasing-to-be and a becoming.
59. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 67; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 51.
60. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 829; 2 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 489.
61. As Kathleen Dow Magnus puts it:

Implicit to the meaning of self-determination, however, is the experience of *not having been* what one determines oneself to be. Genuine self-determination requires that one was *not* 'always already' self-determining. For Hegel, there is no such thing as simply *being* self-determining.

Kathleen Dow Magnus, *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit* 235 (2001).

62. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 69; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.
63. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 69; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.
64. Marcuse, *supra* note 10, at 15.
65. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 83; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.
66. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies* 75–99 (Christopher Smith trans., 1976).
67. *Id.* at 91, citing XIII *Werke* 306 (1832). See 1 *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 283 (E.S. Haldane & Frances H. Simson trans., 1892) ('The recognition of the fact that being and non-being are abstractions devoid of truth, that the first truth is to be found in Becoming, forms a great advance').
68. Gadamer, *supra* note 65, at 87. In the Miller translation, the sentence Gadamer is referring to is:

In the pure reflection of the beginning as it is made in this logic with being as such, the transition is still concealed; because *being* is posited only as immediate, therefore *nothing* emerges in it only immediately.

*SL*, *supra* note 2, at 99; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 85. Gadamer's translator renders 'emerges in it only immediately' into 'bursts forth immediately.' 1 *WL*, *supra*



note 2, at 85 ('bricht das Nichts an ihm nur unmittelbar hervor'). A later remark by Hegel makes the point expressly:

A further remark can be made about the determination of the transition of being and nothing into each other, namely that it is to be understood as it is without any further elaboration of the transition by reflection. It is immediate and quite abstract because the transient moments are themselves abstract, that is, because the determinateness of either moment by means of which they passed over into each other is not yet posited in the other; nothing is not yet *posited* in being, although it is true that being is *essentially* nothing, and *vice versa*. It is therefore inadmissible to employ more developed forms of mediation here and to hold being and nothing in any kind of relationship – the transition is not yet a relation. [No ground or relation can be allowed.] The kind of connexion cannot be further determined without the con-nected *sides* being further determined at the same time.

*SL*, *supra* note 2, at 103; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 89.

69. Gadamer, *supra* note 65, at 89.

70. *SL*, *supra* note 2 at 68; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 53.

71. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 69; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 54.

72. As Hyppolite puts it, '*to know oneself is to contradict oneself*, since this is simultaneously to alienate oneself, to direct oneself towards the Other and to be reflected into, or more exactly, to be reflected into oneself in the Other.' Hyppolite, *supra* note 21, at 75.

73. *SL*, *supra* note 2, at 82–3; 1 *WL*, *supra* note 2, at 67.

74. Adorno agrees. He writes that, when Hegel deals with Becoming,

he waits until being and Nothingness have been equated as wholly empty and indefinite before he pays attention to the difference indicated by the fact that the two concepts literal linguistic meanings are absolutely contrary ... it is not until their synthesis identifies them with each other that the moment will be nonidentical. This is where the claim of their identity obtains that restlessness, that inward shudder, which Hegel calls Becoming.

Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 157 (E.B. Ashton trans. 2000).

75. John Burbidge, 'Where is the Place of Understanding?', in *Essays on Hegel's Logic* 180 (George di Giovanni ed., 1990).



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